

THE  
DOUBTING  
BELEEVER:  
OR,  
A TREATISE  
CONTAINING

- |   |                 |  |
|---|-----------------|--|
| { | 1. The Nature   | } of Doub-<br>tings, in-<br>cident to<br>weak Be-<br>leever. |
| { | 2. The Kinds    |  |
| { | 3. The Springs  |  |
| { | 4. The Remedies |  |

B Y  
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L O N D O N.

Printed by M. F. for Thomas Nicolson  
and are to be sold at his shop in  
Popes-head Alley at the sign  
of the Bible. 1641.







TO THE RIGHT  
HONOURABLE,  
**ROBERT.**

Earl of VVarwick,  
Baron of Leeze, &c.

*My Noble Lord,  
and free Patron.*

MY LORD,



**RENEWED**  
heart is a very  
Heaven in our  
little world, and Faith  
is the onely Sun in that



## *The Epistle*

Heaven. The sinner never comes to be precious, till he comes to be pious; and the value of that piety still advanceth, according to the quantity of true faith, as the Ring is the more considerable with the Diamond. I cannot conceive of a more compendious way for any Christians full and constant revenues, then this, To get faith, and stil to use it: The summe or product of which would be this, Grace and

*Dedicatory.*

and Glory, Heaven and Earth are ours.

Satan well knowes what a serviceable channell Faith is for all our traffique, either for our ship to lanch out into duties, or for Gods ship to come laden in to us with mercies : & therefore there is no Grace which hee batters, and conflicts so with, as with faith : If we weaken or shake foundations, this hath a spreading influence into the whole building : A

A 3

Chri-



## The Epistle

Christians faith cannot be wronged, but presently all the spirituall frame becomes sensible of wrong and losse.

In my weak judgement, it were a great prudence to secure that, which being secured, now secures all. Nothing grows weake, where faith growes strong. My Lord, This poore Treatise which I presume to front with your name, is like *Aaron* and *Hur*, who staid up the hands of *Moses*; So doth

## *Dedicatory.*

doth this Treatise in-  
deavour to stay the  
hand of faith in a weak  
Beleever, who hath an  
ample estate on the  
shore and at land; but  
those waves of doub-  
tings (when he is thrust-  
ing in) too often make  
him to fall back and  
stagger: Whence fol-  
lowes this great unhap-  
pinesse, That whereas  
his faith might have  
served in many preci-  
ous comforts, it is (al-  
most a whole life) im-  
ployed onely to answer



## *The Epistle*

fears and doubts. I humbly present the subsequent Work to your Lordships personal use, and publique patronage. Be pleased (at your leasure) to peruse it, and regard it as the first cognizance of my thankfulness to your Honour, for the Living which you did so freely and lovingly confer upon me, wherein I shall desire faithfully to serve your Lord and mine.

Now the Almighty  
God, and blessed Father,  
abun-

*Dedictory.*

abundantly enrich your  
noble heart with all sa-  
ving graces, and conti-  
nue you long to be an  
instrument of much  
glory to himselfe, com-  
fort to his Church, and  
good to our Common-  
wealth.

*Your Honours*

*perpetually obliged,*

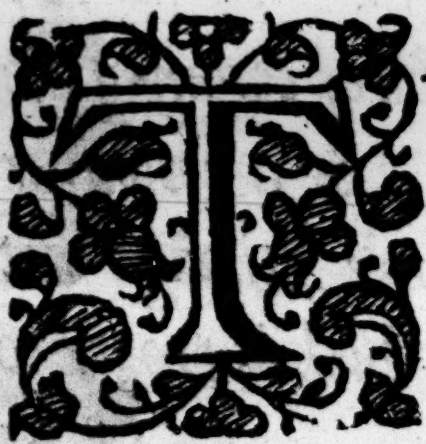
Obadiah Sedgwick.







# To the Christian R E A D E R.



*His Treatise which now is presented to a publike construction, was (many years past) the subject of my private Meditations and Sermons. I did not affect any farther publication of it, then in the Pulpit; but the importunity of others hath com-*



## To the Reader.

compelled it thus to appeare in print: Not that the manner of handling the Subject (here insisted on) is excellent or exquisite, but that the matter handled may be supposed to be of common use and benefit; as a little star hath influence, though not that glory which is proper to the Sun.

The Case which is here put, and discussed, is a Case of common experience: There is no Beleever, but some time or other will confesse it is his. The Sun being seated in an heavenly Orbe, shineth  
with

## To the Reader.

With a very pure and constant light, but the candle (though set and burning in a golden candlestick, yet) burnes with a snuffe, and much variablenesse. When Christians are translated, and transplanted from earth to heaven, then their graces shall become perfections: There are no defects in heaven, there are no mixtures in heaven, but whatsoever is pure there, it is altogether pure: Yet on earth it is otherwise, neither the habits of Grace, nor the acts of Grace are alone in any



## To the Reader.

*any Christian : When I would doe good, evill is present with me, said Paul : And , I beleeve, Lord , help my unbelieve, said that poore man in the Gospel.*

*Where is the Beleever who insists not more on his fears then on his faith ? and is not oftner lamenting his doubts, then rejoycing in his assurances ? None have an interest in Christ, but Beleevers ; None have title to a solid and settled peace, but they : And yet we see the children fearfull, and bondmen*

## To the Reader.

men confident ; the best of men still in suit , and the worst of men quiet , as if in full possession ; none doubting lesse then such as have most cause to doubt , and none doubting more then such as have most cause to triumph in Christ. And in truth thus it will be whiles grosse ignorance veiles over presumptuous sinners , and mis-belief is incident to tender spirits.

And is not the hand of Joab in this businesse too ? Is not Satan in all the sins of wicked men , and in most of the troubles of good men ?  
either



## To the Reader.

either he tempts us to sinne,  
and that will cause us to  
doubt; or else he tempts us  
to doubt, and that will cause  
us to sin. Surely it is not the  
shortest of his wiles and  
arts, in matters of Religion,  
to keep the judgements of  
some still staggering; and in  
matters of a soules interest  
in Christ, to keep the heart  
still doubting. Doth he not  
know that the Christian  
cannot so happily improve  
Christ, who is still in suit to  
prove his title to Christ?

For the better expediting  
of these soule-suits, peruse (if  
thou

## To the Reader.

thou pleasest) this ensuing  
Work, which is (I confesse)  
not a garden for every one to  
walk in, but onely physick for  
the sick or weak. It is inten-  
ded as an Hospitall for the  
lame, onely for a troubled  
sinner, onely for a weak be-  
leever: And the Father of  
our Lord Iesus Christ, the  
Father of mercies, and the  
God of all comfort, even he  
who establissheth us in Christ,  
prosper it for his glory, and  
the help of some one or other.

Thy Faiths servant,

Obadiah Sedgwick.





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A  
TREATISE  
OF  
DOVBTINGS:

FROM  
MATTH. 14. 31.

*O thou of little faith, Wherefore  
didst thou doubt?*



Hese words con-  
taine in them  
the summe of  
a Christian in  
this life, which  
is this: That he

is truly, but yet weakly good.  
Christ here seeth in *Peter*  
(though a Disciple) a defective  
faith, and then a defect of faith:  
Faith he saw in him, yet it was

B

de-



defective. It was little faith : There was truth, but there was not such actuall strength in it as might or should be : And besides this, he espies in him a defect of faith ; not for the habit of it, but for the act of it, *Wherefore didst thou doubt ?* Which words are a conviction that he did doubt, and likewise a correction, *Wherefore didst thou doubt ? q. d.* Thou didst doubt, but thou didst ill so to doubt.

There are many excellent points which might be observed from the Text, I will name some, and insist onely on one of them : Thus then.

1. A true Beleever may be but a weak Beleever, [*Thou of little faith!*]

2. Christ takes notice even of a weak Beleever, [*O thou of little faith!*]

3. Though Christ likes beleeving, yet he dislikes doubting,

ing, [Wherefore didst thou doubt?]

4. A person may be truly beleiving, who neverthelesse is sometimes doubting: In the same person here you see a commendation of the one, and a condemnation of the other, which suppose necessarily a presence of both.

This being the Subject on which I purpose to treat, for the benefit of weak Christians, I shall declare five things concerning it: Namely,

1. The nature of Doubtings.
2. The kinds and diversities of them.
3. Their possible consistence with true faith.
4. Their grounds, & springs, and occasions.
5. Their cures and remedies.



## CAP. I.

*The nature of Doubtings.*

Four qua-  
lities in  
the soule.

Joh. 12. 48

Heb. 12. 25

**T**O understand this, you must know, that in the worst part of the soul, there are severall qualities, *viz.* 1. Infidelity, which strictly and amongst those which professe the Gospel, is a positive rejecting of heavenly truths, with their secret goodnesse; herein men forsake their owne mercies by plain dissents and sleightings of the good word of grace: as is evident in the Pharisees, *Luk.* 7. 30. who rejected the counsell of God, &c.

2. Despaire, which is a manifest dissent, not so much in respect of the thing, or object, (for this is assented unto as true in respect of it selfe, *viz.* That God is mercifull, and Christ did die for sinners) but in respect of the person or subject, wherein the

the soule gives up it self as lost, as without the compasse and hopefulnesse of the divine proclamation: It is perswaded that there is no possibility for it to recover the shore, and therefore sinks in the depths: My meaning is, That such a soule, though it sees that in God, and that in Christ which can save, and doth save others, yet cuts off it self as not at all capable of any interest in the mercie of God, or bloud of Christ; and so eternally falls under its owne weight, as is evident in *Judas* and *Cain*.

Now Despaire, so farre as it makes assent unto Truths, it is opposed unto Infidelity; and so farre as it dissents from speciall goodnesse in them, it is opposed to Faith; and so farre as it concludes impossibility of that good unto it selfe, it is opposed to Hope.

3. Fearfull opinions, which  
B 3 are

As *Jer. 2.*  
25. *There*  
*is no hope:*  
*no.*

*Esa. 38. 18*  
*They that*  
*goe down*  
*into the pit*  
*cannot hope*  
*for thy*  
*truth:*

*This holds*  
*not onely*  
*in the pit*  
*of the*  
*grave, but*  
*also in the*  
*pit of de-*  
*spaire.*



*Simile.*

are positive assents unto Truths, yet raised upon such probable inducements onely, that the soule is left with a suspicion, that the contrary may be true. They are like a man upon a weak plank in a great river, there he sits, and there he fears, because he knows not certainly how long he shall sit there.

4. Doubtings, which are the suspensions or inhibitions (the holdings up) of the soule from any determinate inclinations one way or other: they are the pawlings of the mind.

*Simile.*

As take a man in a journey, where he meets with two waies, he looks on this, and inclines it may be the right, and then he looks on that, and supposeth that it may be the right, and then he looks upon both, and makes a stand, and goes on in neither: So it is with the soule in doubtings (spiritually) There are two wayes before it, two ob-

objects, two works, to beleeve, or not to beleeve, and \* arguments to incline to the one, and to the other, drawing into some equality of strength and weight; just like a paire of scales, answerably ballanced, so that both are at a stand, there is no turning either to the right hand nor to the left. Therefore the Schoolmen say well, that *Dubitatio est motus supra utramq; partem contradictionis, cum formidine determinandi alteram partem ejus.*

\* Dictated from the spirit, and from the flesh; from that, by way of perswasion; from this, by way of dissuasion.

That you may yet conceive this clearly, remember 1. In our minds there are Assentings, which are the adherents of the understanding to truths known: And there are Dissentings, which are the bearings off from those truths. There the soule positively inclines, here it declines; there it puts out the hand, and here it keeps it in.

3. Things to be further observed.

2. Doubtings properly stand betweene them both; they are



not plainly the one, nor plainly the other: If I may speak freely, I conceive them to have a twang of either; they are a *medium*, a middle thing, as your mixt colours are which you cannot stile directly white, or directly black.

Doubtings  
are staggering.

Rom. 4. 20

*Simile.*

The soule hath a desire to joyne unto Truth, it hath a desire to share in that goodnesse which it apprehends; yet it neither fastens, nor yet rejects, but like the fish to the bait, it likes it, and is striking at it, but dares not, and swims about; or like *a wave of the sea*, (that is the Apostles comparison, *James 1. 6.*) thrusting to the shore, and yet drawing back; or like a Meteor hovering in the aire twixt up and downe: Such rowling, reeling actions of the soule are doubtings; they are a recoyling adventuring: The soule sees reason of either side, to draw, and withdraw, to give on, and to

to give back. It sees Christ and the promises, knowes the goodnesse and bounty in the one and the other, whereupon it is giving on upon them, and putting out the hand, but then instantly it checks it selfe, and is stayed with contrary arguments and feares; I may not be so bold, Perhaps they belong not unto me.

So that the person is hanging betwixt hope and feare, I would, but I may not; I may, but I dare not: It is just with the soul as with those at Chess, they set out a man, and think to take a King, but then presently they are checked, and draw him back againe: God he is my Lord and my King, nay and yet he is not; He will do me good, yet I feare he will not; He hath pardoned my sins, and yet I fear he hath not; He doth heare my prayer, yet I doubt he doth not; My estate is good and happy.



neverthelesse I suspect it is not.

*Simile.*

Thus doth a man waver, and rowle, and is like a man in the ungrounded places, he no sooner plucks up one leg out of the dirt, but the other sinks in: the soule is not determined one way or other.

*Note.*

3. One thing know more, that though the mind doth not pitch or rise unto a determinate action in spirituall doubtings, yet it ever inclines towards a determinate object: That is, though the doubting Christian cannot come yet to quit those uncertaine, and trembling, and shivering motions, and bring them to a stayednesse, and positive fixing, yet his mind hones, it lookes after Christ and the promises; it doth not reject, nor doth it give up all hopes; it keeps in it two things, which Infidelity and Despaire want.

2. Things.

1. One is, that it priseteth Christ

Christ and the promises, though it cannot claspe them.

2. Another is, that it gives not up the case as desperate and impossible; but though it cannot fixe, yet it will be hovering about them.



## C A P. II.

*The kinds and diversities of them.*

**T**He second thing respects the sorts of doubtings, and these I must also touch.

I conjecture that there are foure sorts of doubtings.

1. Some are of admiration: in these the mind doth not gain-say simply, no, it doth beleeve, and is onely sollicitous about the hidden manner, or way of performance, or accomplishment. Such a doubting was that of the Virgin, *Luke 1.34. How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*

4. Sorts of doubtings.

Luk. 1.34.



\* *Tom. 5. de  
Mariæ in-  
terrog.*

*Judg 6.  
36, 37.*

*man? Non dubitat esse faciendum, sed quomodo fieri possit, inquit, saith S.\* Ambrose.*

2. Others are of confirmation: Where the soule beleeves, but desires something more to secure and settle it, so that it might be put out of all doubt, as was that of *Gedeons*, *Judg. 6. 36, 37, 39.* Which kindes of doubtings are the cravings of a little more indulgent security from God in matters of extraordinary concernment; not that we properly question the verity of him, but that (in respect of our selves) we might work the more confidently upon clearer evidence and warrant.

3. A third sort are of negation: and this is such a forme of scrupling, wherein we plainly suspect God of his good word of truth; and is incident unto evill men in their generall course, and to good men in respect of some particular carriages and bu-

businesses, as is evident in *Zacharias, Luke 1.18. Whereby shall I know this?* This question was a question of doubting, and this doubting, no question, was an unbelieving one: It did not credit the Angels message; so is it expressed, *ver. 20. Thou shalt be dumbe, because thou beleevest not my words.*

Luk. 1. 18.

4. A fourth sort are of inquisition, where the mind is diversly carried, and is not come to a rest, as when a cause is not come to a sentence, but hangs in suspence. Now of this sort of doubtings wee speak at this time, which againe may be branched,

1. Into *Reall*, which questions the principles themselves, either for truth or goodnesse, and so they respect matters of faith; or else they question actions touching lawfulnessse or unlawfulnessse, and so they respect matters of fact: In which respect



\* As Rom.  
14. 23.

spect they are more specially  
stiled Scruples of conscience  
which are nothing else but some  
grating and painfull doubts a  
bout points \* practicall : O  
which see the Casuists.

2. Into *Personall*; Where not  
the things in themselves, but in  
respect of our selves, are question  
ed, and onely questioned, not  
peremptorily denyed or reje  
cted : *viz.* I know and beleieve  
that God is a Father, that Christ  
is a Redeemer, and the Saviour  
of sinners ; I now doubt, Not  
whether there be any truth, or  
good in these, (for these I yeeld  
but upon view of my great sin  
fulnesse and many defects,  
now onely question (and this is  
enough) whether my interest  
be in that truth and goodnesse  
What is said here of a case re  
specting Spiritualls, the same  
may be said of that other re  
specting the promises for Tem  
poralls, because that doubting

See Luke  
12. 28.

doe

doe extend to both.

3. Again, there are two sorts of personall doubtings.

1. Some are privative, which remove all prelence of faith: of which see 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. and *Jam.* 1. 6.

2. Some are contrary, which doe minnere, but not negare; they do impaire, and keep faith low, but not wholly deny or extinguish it, as in our present Text.



### C A P. III.

*Of their possible consistence with Faith.*

**A**Nd here lies the kernell, Whether personall doubtings, (*i.e.*) doubtings of a mans particular interest in God, and Christ, and the promises, may consist with personall Faith?

To which I answer, They may: For (and mark it well) though  
1. Doub-

*Quest.*

*Sol.*



1. Doubtings be sinfull, for they are the smoakings of corruption.

2. They be no part of Faith.

3. They cannot consist at the same instant with the acts of faith; for it is impossible that faith should formally doubt. As it is impossible that I should lay hand on the rock, and not lay hand at the same time; or that mine eye should see and not see the colour at the same time; or my hand receive, and not receive the gift at the same time: So is it impossible that the soule when it doth beleieve, should doubt, forasmuch as Faith in act, and doubt in act, are opposite; and the soule cannot possibly set out from one faculty at the same time opposite acts; I confesse successively it may, yet simultaneously it cannot: But now to beleieve, and to doubt, are opposite; for in the one I embrace, in the other I doe not  
em-

*Simile.*

*In sensu  
composito.*

embrace; in the one I rest, in the other not, &c.

Yet fourthly, Actuall doubtings may be in a person who hath habituall faith; for this you must know, that faith and doubtings are not opposed as life and death, where the presence of the one determinately concludes the totall absence of the other; but as cold and heat in remisse degrees in the subject, where though the nature of cold be not the nature of heat, but naturally one is expulsive of the other, yet both lodge in the same roome; So Faith is not Doubting, and Doubting is not Faith, one of these is expulsive of the other, yet both may and doe meet in the same person:

Who is notwithstanding called a Beleever from the most eminent part: For as we truly call many persons beautifull persons, though in some one or other

Actuall doubtings may consist with habituall faith.

How one is styled a Beleever, yet hath doubtings.  
*Simile.*



other limbe there may be some faulty incongruity in nature, (because that which is better still denominates or gives the name) so we say that Christians are true beleevers, because they have faith really in their souls, notwithstanding many culpable doubtings which they feele and expresse.

It were a folly indeed that men should think their fields had no corne, because there are many filthy weeds; or that the heap hath no wheat, because much chaffe; or the pile no gold, because much drosse; or the soule no faith, because many doubtings.

I had almost said (let it goe, I think it is a truth) there is none had faith, but hath found his doubtings. Did you ever see a fire without smoke? Smoke is no part of the fire, yet it steams from that fuell, to which fire is put: So it is with faith,  
and

and doubtings, &c.

Nay see this truth put out of all doubt by severall instances in Scripture: Let this of *Mat.*

*14. 31.* be the first, *O thou of little faith,* (said Christ to *Peter*) *Wherefore didst thou doubt?*

Where, though Christ did reprehend him for doubting, yet as he doth intimate his doubting, so his faith too: Hee had faith, though little, and doubtings, though he had that faith; there was the one, and there was the other, they were both in *Peter*; For he had not stepped out, but for faith, and he had not funke, but for his doubtings.

Observe *Abraham* himselfe, *the father of the faithfull*; yet we find him winding and turning, shuffling and doubting more then once, if we reade *Gen. 12.* and *Gen. 15. 2, 3.* and *Gen. 20.*

So *David* had his tremblings, his faintings, his suspicions; all in

Beleevvers  
have  
doubted.

*Peter.*

*Abraham.*

*David.*



Pl. 116. 11

Psa. 31. 22

*God hath  
forgotten  
me, &c.*

Job.

in him was not faith ; He in his haste falls out with some forgers, who yet spake nothing but the truth of God : And so again, in his haste, he is *cut off from before the eyes of God*, who yet heard the voice of his supplications.

Job also, a man of great sorrows, and of great faith, yet had hee not his qualmes ? his shakings ? his questionings ? Indeed in some places he seems Heroicke in his faith, graciously victorious over all calamities, and riding above all waves ; yet in other places we find the Man as well as the Beleever ; he staggers, he feares, he is giving up.

The faithfull in Scripture are compared oftentimes to Trees, which though they be well rooted, yet may be shaken ; and to Noahs Arke, which though it was a safe harbour, yet it was tossed ; and to an house built on a rock, which though it be firme and cannot be removed, yet it may

may be moved; and to *Starres*, which though they be heavenly, yet are twinckling; and amongst them, much to the *Moone*, which with her light hath yet some dark spots.

What should I alledge examples? Let your owne experiences, and daily complaints sufficiently answer to this; let them give verdict: Some of you have not yet risen above your fears. Let God hold up his favour, doe you not presently doubt? Let him hold in his hand, doe you not also doubt? O how we tosse, and rowle, and stagger in every sensible difficulty! In matters of this life, scarce a contrary occurrence which doth not distract us. Thus is it with most of us in our infancie, and in our settings out; But for you who are of further perfection, who are ripened unto an assurance, perhaps unto a full assurance, can you never remember any bow-

Experiences.



bowings, shakings, shiverings, doubtings? Or think you never to meet with any more? I have known the Sun one day bright, and the next covered; and *David's* mountaine strong: But *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled, P sal. 30.*

Besides all this, consider the nature and condition of true faith in this life; It must then be granted that there may be doubtings with it, forasmuch as no grace is perfect in this life, it hath its contrary in the same subject in some remisse degrees. And it is one work of faith still to be casting out of doubt which doe rise in the minde, which working could not be unlesse there they were.

*Obj.*

But will you say, Whence should these arise? Doth God alter in his love, in his nature, in his fidelity? Or doe the Promises (which are the great stay of faith) goe and come, ebb

an

and flow? Doe they vary from  
themselves, either for truth or  
goodnesse? Or doth Christ the  
foundation, the rock on which  
our faith is built, is not he the  
same yesterday, to day, and for ever?  
If so, how, why, whence is it  
that a Beleever should doubt?

I answer, That though there  
be the samenesse in God, in  
Christ, in the Word, yet there is  
not an onenesse in us; and the  
variations in us doe in no wise  
conclude any thing in them, no  
more then the severall alterati-  
ons in the ayre doe inferre a di-  
versity in the Sunne, which is  
one and the same in respect of  
himselſe, however the changes  
be multiplied here below.  
Therefore know that the

*Sol.*

CAP.



## CAP. IV.

*Springs, Causes, and Occasions of doubting are or may be these.*

The first  
cause of  
doubtings.

Originall  
sinne the  
fountainne  
of unbelief

It corrupts  
and mis-  
informs  
the mind,  
and with-  
holds the  
will.

It is a dis-  
ease hang-  
ing about  
the best.

*Note.*

I. **N**aturall corruption: This is a corrupt root, the seed of all sinne, and of unbelief. This is that *flesh* which doth *lust against the spirit*, and thrusts up abundance of motions, and corrupt reasonings, and motives to interrupt our faith in its great businesse of believing: So that when we would doe good, evill is present with us; and when wee would believe, unbelief is present with us.

It is very true, that in our conversion, the soule is graciously enlarged, and the powers of sin are crushed, Yet so, that still we goe with a chaine about our leg: And though sin hath a deaths-wound, yet so much life is still remaining as to interrupt

our Graces, to resist them; yea (and if we looke not well unto it) to stay and bind them.

He who hath a maime in his leg, cannot move in that manner or measure as he desires; and a wounded hand or arme cannot stretch out it self, and lay hold at all times. Corruption is in the best, and will doe its part, and that is one reason why we cannot doe all our part in beleevving.

*Simile.*

You know in the Warres, how the intentions and motions of one side are stopt, and kept up, by the malice, and subtilty, and power of the other; and that there may be many veines of sweetest water under the earth, which yet are many times checked and controlled by the falling down of earth. O this body of sinne, which (*volentes volentes*) wee must yet carry about with us, how backward is it to come

*Simile.*



to Christ? how unbeleeving is it? how suspicious? how fearfull? It will not be perswaded, it will not hearken, it will not credit, it will not yeeld, it will not imbrace.

Luk. 24. 21

Luk. 24. 25

\* 38.

A second  
cause of  
doubtings.

The very Disciples, who had the presence of Christ, who saw the Miracles of Christ, who heard the voice of Christ, how often did they doubt? did they question? *Whence shall we have bread to feed so many? \* We had trusted it should have been he who should have redeemed Israel.* So that Christ reproves them more then once or twice, *O slow of heart to beleeve, &c. \* Why doe thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my selfe: But Christ apologiseth for them, The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

2. Imperfection of faith; this is another cause of doubting. Why should a child fall so much,

much, and a man so seldome? is it not the weaknesse in the nerves, and sinews, and low motive parts? When fire is newly kindled, it is but little, and hath much smoke; so is it with our faith, the more imperfect it is, the more doubtings it finds.

*Matth. 14. 31. O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

Little faith, and great doubtings goe together; like a little heat, and great mists. Some men are but Babes in Christ, they are but plants in the garden, they are but lambs in the fold: Now children are apt to feare, and plants to shake, and lambs to flag behind, and weak beleivers to doubt: Lay a little burden on a childs shoulder, he knowes not what to doe; shew him the water, hee cryes out: So is it with weak beleivers; Their strength is not proportioned

*Simile.*

Weake  
faith and  
many  
doubtings  
goe toge-  
ther.

*Simile.*



unto unusuall exigences; Neither have they experiences, nor that quicknesse of art to hye them to their helps.

And these are great matters, 1. when a man wants strength to deale with his enemy, and 2. when he hath not had experience: Therefore let us consider this yet more; Where faith is weake or imperfect, there are three things incident unto those Beleevers.

Three  
things in  
weak be-  
leevers.

*David.*

1. They want ability to argue: for their experience is little, and therefore their judgments are not so settled; so that they cannot alwayes maintaine their ground. *David*, because of former experiences, he is not *amazed* at the uncircumcised Philistine, but *rests* upon that God for victory here, who had granted him *former* deliverances from the Beare and the Lion. And so *Paul* confirms himselfe, 2 *Cor.*

*Paul.*  
2 *Cor.* 1.

1.10. who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver\*: but weak faith hath little experience of Gods truths, and of Gods power, and of Gods method and times.

2. They see their wants and hindrances, more then their helps and encouragements: like *Elisha's* servant, who saw the multitude of the enemies compassing the city with horses and chariots, and thereupon cryed out, *Alas my Master, how shall we doe?* but (at first) he saw not the mountaine full of horses, and chariots of fire round about *Elisha*, which might have stayed and upheld him.

It is with new and weake Beleevers, as with the Israelites, who did heare of the sons of *Anak*, those mighty Gyants, and of the high & mighty

*David* was right in *Psal. 9.10.* They that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou Lord hast not forsaken those that seek thee.

*Elisha's* servant, 2 King. 6. 15, 16, 17.

Israelites.



ty walls about the city of Canaan, they looked on these, and were greatly perplexed and discouraged, but they did not looke on the strong and Almighty God, who did promise to goe with them, and conquer for them: So do these, they look upon the meer temptations and suggestions of Satan, they looke upon the powerfull stirrings of remaining corruption, they look upon the strength of present crosses. they look upon their own weaknesses against all these, they look upon Gods delayings, upon their owne dulnesses, and whatsoever may keep them downe; but they look not upon that God who hath promised, who hath performed the oath to *Abraham* the father of the faithfull; they look not upon Christ, who hath by his blood ratified and sealed the Covenant, they look not upon  
that

that mighty spirit of grace in them; they look not upon other standing Christians, who can tell them that God is true in all his promises, and assuredly righteous, and a present help, and who never fails them that trust upon him and wait.

3. They cannot repaire unto the establishments of faith as strong beleivers can: They are not yet so acquainted with the Armory of faith; the Promises, they are the Armory of faith; but now these Promises are many, and are graciously framed to the variety of our conditions; which because the beginning Beleever knows not, therefore in the times of changes, being not so ready, having not his weapons, nor being so presently able to send them out, hence it is that doubtings doe so arise, yea and so grow upon him in such strength, that he is like to faint.

The Armory of faith.



*Note.*

You shall experimentally finde many good people, who have in some cases maintained their ground with credit to their faith, (for they have traversed a particular vein of the Promises, they have found them out, they have applyed them, and made use of them, by vertue of which they have borne down the many risings of doubt and fear in that kind, and have singularly enabled and comforted their hearts against distrust and feare.)

But these self-same persons on a sudden have been and are strangely puzzled, distressed, afraid, doubtfull, full of fears and dejections, and all that they can doe is to bear up, yea and that is hardly done too: Why? what is the matter? have they not faith? Yes; and doth not that faith work? Perhaps it doth in a generall way, but with particular efficacie they cannot

cannot yet observe it: How so? This, there is a new kind of trouble, a new burden, which yet they were not put unto, and they cannot find any promise to reach that same: and hence it is that their fears and doubtings doe exceedingly sprout up and distract them.

And this is found to be very true, that in particular and sensible distresses, (be the matter and kind what they may be) the soul remains in a hurried perplexity, in a waveing unsetlednesse untill that faith can find out a Promise to answer it either expressly or virtually: One of these two wayes it must reach us in our conditions, or else our feares are up.

2. The studying of the life of sense: This is another spring of doubting: which is evident in *Thomas*, *John 20.25*. *Except I shall see in his hand the print of*

Till faith doth settle we shall be unsetled.

The third cause of doubtings.

*Joh. 20.25*



*the nailes, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not beleeeve: He must see and feele, or else he is faithlesse.*

The life  
of sense  
what it is.

Now to study the life of sense is this, *viz.* To place the disposition of God, and the issues of our condition in our feelings and sensible apprehensions: As to beleeeve that God is my God, because I find him so; That he is gracious, because I find a sensible answer of my prayers; That he doth accept of my services, because I finde that life of affections. So on the contrary, that he is not my God, because I finde not those sensible reports of his favour; I find not that quicknesse, and former smartnesse of affections; I find not present answers unto all my desires & requests; That I am not in the estate of Grace, because I feele not the vigours, and secret increasings of grace; That I doe not beleeeve.

leeve, because I do not rejoyce,  
nor see my sinnes blotted  
out, &c.

Which kind of life must ve-  
rily be exposed unto infinite  
and continuall doubtings :  
For,

1. The soule here hath no  
constant bottome to settle up-  
on ; our feeling is sometimes  
more, sometimes lesse, some-  
times none at all. Indeed it is  
true, that faith may breed fee-  
ling, but then it is as true, that  
faith may be without it : As  
the soule doth breed seeing  
and hearing in the eyes and  
eares, yet the soule may be in  
the man when these doe not  
see, and these doe not heare :  
A man cannot but be perplex-  
ed in his thoughts, if he holds  
this opinion, That meat doth  
not nourish him, unlesse hee  
presently sees how the parts  
grow bigger by it ; or, That  
his father doth not love him,  
because

Three de-  
monstrati-  
ons, that  
the life of  
sense cau-  
seth doub-  
tings.

A bowle  
upon a  
bowle, &c.

Sense  
meets  
with con-  
trarieties,  
& cannot  
resolve  
them : but  
faith can  
reconcile  
all by re-  
sting on  
God and  
his Word.  
(David,  
Iob, and  
Paul, &c.)



Conclusions can never bee firme, which depend upon variable & changeable principles.

because hee is not alwayes smoothing and stroking of him; or That his seed is lost, because it is not a present harvest; or That the channell will shortly be dry, and without water, because the Tide is gone out, and hath left it naked: In like manner, to conclude against our soules from Sensibles, and Mutables, exposeth it to the labyrinth of daily fears and scruples.

*Note.*

But secondly, the soul hereby doth advantage Satan in his suggestions; for the life of sense (like the rowling sea) is open to all winds, it hath a secret, restlesse, unquiet distemper of its own; but besides that it is open to the singular disturbances and inquietations from the devill: For the life of sense hath made two propositions for him of the despairing Syllogisme, and he can easily make the other: *viz.*

He

He who hath not the sense of Gods favour, present answers from God, feelings of his graces in their nature and measure, cannot be in the state of grace and salvation, (this is the Maxime of sense) But thou (saith Satan) hast not the sense of Gods favour, &c. *Ergo*, saith he, Thou art not, *Ergo* also sayest thou, I am not in the state of grace and salvation.

The syllogisme of sense.

Loe here the issues of the life of sense! And now, no marvaile if the soule gives not on upon Christ or the promises, but is tossed to and fro, and hangs in extreame suspence.

Yet thirdly, it is a life which doth much dishonour God, and therefore exposed to many feares and unsetlednesses: What? To measure the truths of God by our feeling? and the graciousnesse of God by our sense? what is this but to ar-



God will not stoop to our unbelieving way of sense, but we must rise to his granting way of faith.

**Note.**  
We know not what a promise will doe, till we lay hold.

The fourth  
cause of  
doubtings.

arraigne God both for truth and graciousnesse? What is this but to set upon God, and give the sentence, which he hath kept in his owne hands? What is this, but to limit the holy One of Israel? yea, to correct his wisdom, as not being skilful to order the businesse of our salvation, unlesse we alwayes have an eye or a finger at every turn to know his particular intentions and proceedings with us?

It is a glorious and singular way to beleeve so long, untill we come downe to feeling; But to begin with feeling, and so rise to beleeving, is a delusion both dangerous and impossible; for thou canst never truly feele, unlesse thou dost first beleeve: Canst thou truly warme thy heart with that divine favour which faith did not let in?

A fourth cause of doubtings,  
is,

is, when we deny Faith its matter and grounds to work : How is that ? It is, when we guide the whole businesse below, and not above; I will give you some instances.

1. You know that the condition of Grace is exposed to many short allowances in externalls; and the condition of sinfull men is capable of large prosperity in worldly things; A good man may have many wants, and an evill man may have, in this life, his good things, (as *Abraham* speaks of *Dives*.) Now when a person looks upon the bulke, upon the outward part, upon the shell, upon the rinde of things, and sees plenty with evill men, and poverty with good men; honour shining there, and contempt clouding here; fulnesse for them, and leannesse for these; pleasures and liberties attending them, and sorrowes  
and

We give not faith its perfect work and full scope to all objects and all occasions.

Foure instances.

Prosperity of evill men, and adversities of good.



Psal. 73. 2.

3.

12.

13.

14.

and restraints befalling these ; when I say he looks on this, and no higher then this, it is possible that suspitions and doubtings may start up ; it is possible that the soul may sink downe somewhat at it. See an evidence in *Asaph*, *Psal. 73. 2.*

*My feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipt. 3. When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

*12. These are the ungodly who prosper in the world, they increase*

*in riches. 13. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed*

*my hands in innocency. 14. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*

Observe here his distrusts and doubts ; As if his gracious course did no way benefit him, or as if he had served God for nought.

And thus he goes on, whiles he bends his thoughts downward, whiles he keeps in his faith, whiles he denyed it matter

ter to work upon; but *ver. 17.* there he gives scope for faith to worke, and then he is free againe, and well againe, [*Vntill I went into the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.*]

2. In case of the sinfull condition; Whiles we look on it, and deny Faith its matter also to work upon, we shal be ful of doubtings. Let a man look on-ly upō his sins, upon the nature of them, the aggravations of them, what will come of it?

1. Strong humiliations, and those are good. 2. Doubtings and despaires, and those are bad. The single considerations of sin, are the matter onely of our feare; they are a grievous burden: *David* was not able to stand under it, *My sins are too heavy a burden for me to bear, Psal. 38.4.*

For what hope is there in our selves? What is in a sinner to uphold a sinner? No bur-  
den

But 17.

Sinfull  
condition.



*Psal. 38.4.*

Nothing  
in a sinner  
to uphold  
a sinner.



den is an ease to it selfe. Let people behold their finnes, and not use their faith, they cannot but doubt; for now sinne appears in all the motives and causes of feare, and now God appeares not in the nature of a friend, but with the countenance of an enemy, and of a severe Judge; and where now can the troubled soule anchor, or fasten, or ease it selfe?

God (you know) hath given unto Man two eares and two eyes; if we make use of one onely, our lives wil often hang in doubt and suspence, If wee have not an eare \* to heare what God saith to an humbled sinner, as well as an eare to heare what Conscience will say unto a sinner: If we have not an eye to look unto Christ, as well as an eye to look unto our sins; an eye to behold the brazen Serpent, as well as an eye to behold the biting, fiery Serpent,

\*Psa. 81. 8  
I will hear  
what God  
the Lord  
will speak,  
&c.

Serpent, we cannot then but doubt : As we must give conscience its scope to work upon sin, so we must give Faith its scope to work upon Christ, else we shall neither be freed from our doubtings, nor yet from our sinnes which cause those doubtings.

Note.

Bodily distractions.

David.

\* 1 Sam.  
27.1.

Peter.

Mat. 14.30

Iehoshaphat.

2 Chron.

20.12.

3. In case of bodily distractions and occurrences, which put us into an exigence or strait; if we look below onely, if wee looke upon their strength, and our strength onely, it will now be with us, as with *David* tired out, and almost spent by the huntings and pursuings of *Saul*, \* *I shall surely one day fall by the hand of Saul*; or as with *Peter*, who looking upon the waves, (and not upon Christ) began to sink, and cryed, *Lord save mee*; or as with *Iehoshaphat*, whiles he looked upon the great Armies, *We know not what to doe*.

Not



Our selves

A little  
before the  
K. of Swede-  
den came  
into Ger-  
many.

\* This was  
preached  
in the  
times of  
the great  
calamities  
of the  
Church in  
Germany.

Whiles  
our eyes  
are down,  
our fears  
will up.

Not long since, we might have read this in our very faces, when the Churches abroad were in great distresse; wee looked on their dust and ashes, their ruines and weaknesse; we looked on man, and gave up all for lost; We did not look upon God, and therefore our ship was full of water, our hearts did faile us, doubts and feares like a black cloud did overspread us: Nay at \* this very time wee heare of an externally disproportionable strength, that the enemies are more in number, they are confederate, they complot, they intend a great designe, and now I find the fears, the doubts wagging; and assuredly whiles we look downward onely, and not upward; whiles wee lay events & issues upon the creature; whiles we give faith no scope to look up and work upon that God who can save by a

a few as well as by many, wee shall never be freed from doubtings.

The very same is true in our personall occurrences ; as long as we look on the things onely which we meet withall, and oppose our own strength unto them, it will be with us as an house without pillars, tottering with every blast; or as with a ship without an anchor, tossed with every wave : For every crosse is too hard for us, though none can be too hard for God.

*Simile.*

4. So for temptations ; Here also our doubtings fly up, because our faith flies not out. O say we, we are not able to beare, to withstand, to overcome ; the temptations are strong, and many, and daily. Suppose so ; And what do we ? Verily we are soone ready to sit downe, and to give the day to Satan, never considering that

Temptations.



that God gives his Soldiers his Armes; never considering that the quarrell and battle is the Lords, he is engaged in the fight, for all is for his sake: We think that God looks on one-ly, and beleeve not how much he curbs Satan, and sustains us; As if Satan might doe what he pleased, and God left us alone to grapple; whereas the Lord makes manifest his power in our weaknesse, and his grace is sufficient for us, and he will bruise Satan shortly under our feet.

2 Cor. 12.

Rom. 16.

The fift  
cause of  
doubtings.

*Simile.*

A fift cause of doubtings, may be particular and speciall sins after conversion:

Which are like water dropped into a candle, making it to burne flat and dull, with a black snuffe at the top, and catching as it were, going up and downe for hold: or as a rheume, a salt rheume, falne into the eyes, which intercepts the

the sight, and darkens it for a time : So doe our speciall sins after conversion, they do dim, and darken the soule, and like those inclosed spirits of the ayre in the bowels of the earth, they cause many fearfull shakings and tremblings, as is evidēt in *David* after his great sins of Adultery and Murder, they did exceedingly weaken his spiritual condition, and wiped off all his comfortables.

*David,*  
*Psal. 51.*

Beloved, these finnes, they must needs be a strong spring of doubtings, if we do but consider,

1. That it is their nature to set us off from the shoare and harbour : You know that a Ship which lies quiet in the harbour, or by the shoare, thrust it out, lanch it into the sea, it is tossed againe: Now in all knowne sins which wound the conscience, (after conversion) wee loosen the Anchor, and

Four  
things  
here about  
speciall  
sins.

*Simile.*



Speciall  
sinnes,  
though  
they loose  
not the  
estate, yet  
they loose  
our  
hold.

*Simile.*

*Psal. 77. 3.*

and put off; The Promises, and Christ, (upon which our confidences were anchored) doe now seeme to give, they will leave, they will withdraw.

But suppose, in their sensible virtue they should not, (which yet they do) nevertheless we cannot fasten now, for the very temper of the soule is injured, our spirit is wounded. You know though the staffe doth stand where it did, and as it did, yet if my hand be wounded, I cannot claspe it, nor use it as formerly.

Now, what think you, must not the soule needs be filled with feares, and with doubts, which hath thrust it selfe thus from such a gracious harbour as the mercies, the loving kindnesse, the sweet and blessed promises of God? may it not say now, as *David* once, *Psal. 77. 3. I remembred God, and was troubled?* and well mayst

mayst thou be troubled, who wouldst for such a sin pull away thy hand from such a God.

2. God doth really take these finnes ill, very ill, from those upon whom hee hath conferred such fruits of his love: For this is a truth, that in case of offences, Love and Bounty can give in the strongest and heaviest aggravations: As in that of David, *2 Sam.*

*12.7. I anointed thee King over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul: 8. And I gave thee thy masters house, and gave thee the house of Israel and Iudah; and if that had beene too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.*

*9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandement of the Lord to doe evill in his sight, &c.*

Observe how the Lord pleads it, and aggravates it upon David. Now when a child  
D knows

Gods  
goodnesse  
aggravates  
our sin-  
ning.

*2 Sa. 12. 7.*

8.

9.

*Simile.*



knows that he hath committed a fault, (concerning which his father gave him a special charge, See thou doe it not) and withall he knowes that his father is fully acquainted with all the businesse, it is likely (we find it so) that feares and doubtings gather within the breast of the child; Hee dares not keep off, and yet he is afraid to come in; he knows that his father hath taken it ill at his hands.

**Note.**  
Sin in any,  
hated of  
God.

**Simile.**

So it is with us after our speciall sins, we know that God hates them, (he hates them not personally, but naturally; not because in such persons, but because in any persons) Their nature is repugnant to his: (as we hate poison for it selfe, and therefore let it be in a Toad, or in a Princes Cabin, we hate it still) and they now have falne upon such sins, and have incensed a gracious Father

ther, what notable fears, what strange misgivings, what appalings get up now upon the heart?

Where is my Father? (saith the offending child) He is within, (saith one) away hee runs; or he is abroad, and then downe he sits, and weeps, and bewailes his losse, I shall never gaine his favour againe.

Thus it is with us after our speciall sins; If God seeme to draw towards us, we are ready to fly from him: *I heard thy voice (saith Adam) and was afraid, and hid my selfe*: And if he doth not draw towards us, we sit downe, wring our souls, and fetch many a deep Ah, Ah what have I done! Ah mee, What, Where am I now? I have provoked my God, and am afraid to come unto him, &c.

3. God doth not easily open his favour unto those who



*David to  
Absolom.*

And God  
to *David*.  
Psal. 51.

Note.

Psal. 77.7.

thus abuse it : There was free intercoursetwixt God and the soule before ; but now the doore is shut, which before was open, and God himselfe will keep the key, so that nothing, no meanes or wayes shall open unto us, untill hee doth please. You remember how *David* kept his distance from *Absolom* for his lewdnesse, he kept him off a long time, he might not see the *Kings* face : And *David* himselfe for his sinnes against his Father, could not (without long suings) see the face of God, as before, *Psal.* 51.

And now thinke you it strange that the soule should doubt ? Assuredly great desires delayed and prorogued doe cause great feares ; yea, it breeds singular suspitions, May be I shall be still put off ; Will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will he be favourable no more ? *Pf.* 77.7.

4. Nay,

4. Nay, now the soule being made sensible, and having weighed all circumstances, can and doth teach it selfe many arguments and reasons to keep off; It is apt enough to fall upon it selfe, and to keep downe any readinesse which it observes to give on upon God or Christ.

Tender  
& wounded hearts  
apt to multiply exceptions  
against themselves.

It is some time before faith can find a way to ingratiate this offending soule, and to espie a sufficient *medium* by and through which it may close with God for pardon and favour: And when faith hath found it out, then our mil-giving hearts beat us off; and as our weak children pluck down the bird soaring up, with a string, so do our weak hearts pull in our faith which is now speeding towards heaven by the blood of Jesus Christ for us.

*Simile.*

The more tenderesse wee  
D 3 gaine



we gaine of the fins, the more shynesse and fear grows on us, and seldome doth the soule recover its former hold, and ancient correspondence and intimatenesse with God, untill there hath been a proportionable humiliation, and spaces of fetled reformation: Twixt which, and the great discovery of speciall and renewed assurance, the heart meets with many a wave, with many a sad day, with many a fearfull rising, with many strong and terrible doubtings.

So then you see, that speciall finnes after conversion, doe cause great doubtings in the soule, because they make a jar, a wound, they lay a barre twixt us and God, they keep up God, and keep down faith, and give up all the matters of disheartning and feare, they make the soul to be at a stand, to goe away from the gates of heaven

heaven many times with singular checks and heavinesse.

6. A sixth cause of doubtings, may be indispositions unto or about spirituall duties: when our Altar seemes to have no fire, our bodies to have no soules, our affections to bee estranged from our services; when we pray, but not with that fervencie; when we hear, but not with that attentive-nesse; when we set upon any sort of duty, but not with that alacrity, with that joy, with those becomming spirits.

Nay sometimes there is a strange listlesnesse, a kind of flat dulnesse, drowzinesse, that we hardly move upon our work, much adoe to draw our selves unto duty. Like the Disciples, the soule is so heavy, that it can hardly watch and pray.

Out of which kind of slumberings, the hearts of Christi-

A sixth  
cause of  
doubtings.

Like the  
Disciples.

It troubles  
a Captain  
when he  
cannot  
make his  
men come  
on and  
fight.



ans doe ordinarily awake with doubtings, and that about two particulars especially.

Two places of doubtings hence.

Note.

Pf. 119. 14

David.

Ier. 15. 16.

Esay 56. 7.

1. One respects the verity and being of Grace: As Gedeon in another case, (*Judg. 6. 13.*) *If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallne us?* So here, If truth of Grace were in me, how should all these indispositions, dulnesses, deadnesses accompany me? Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty, but I am as one chained up: Where Grace is truly kindled, there is a holy fire to warme the heart in duty; *I have rejoyced in the way of thy testimonies, (Psal. 119. 14.) and with my whole heart have I sought thee, So David. Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoycing of my heart, for I am called by thy Name O Lord of Hosts, saith Jeremiah, Chap. 15. 16. And the Prophet Esay, Chap. 56. 7. saith, God will make his people joyfull in*

*in his house of Prayer* : And besides all this, we are commanded to *serve the Lord with gladnesse*, *Psal. 100. 2.*

*Psa. 100. 2*

Whereupon the soule mis-gives, How can my condition be good, which differs so much from the secret and lively dispositions of Grace? How can it be good which is so unanswerable to that quicknesse promised, and found in the people of God? How can I be good, who about the actions of good am so dull and heavy, awkward and slow? &c.

2. But then, suppose the soule can cleare and assoyle it self from this feare, (by knowing that fire may be where it doth not alwayes flame, and the root may live where the branches do not alwayes flourish, and by finding some answerable dulnesses in some eminent  *Davids* , who often have prayed for quickning)



yet there ariseth another doubting from our dulnesse and indisposition, which is a feare of acceptance, The Lord will not accept of these services, because they are so heavy, they are therefore without any efficacie. Suppose I may be good, yet they are bad, and can win no favour with God. Thus the soule is oft-times much perplexed by reason of its indispositions; as if either it were totally bad, or God intended little good unto it, because it is not quickned, and more enlivened in the services presented unto him. And verily it will much trouble a tender and sincere heart to observe in it selfe such flat and dull opinions of God and Christ, and such an ineptitude in it selfe in doing that, which to doe with the best of its strength, and might, and affections, it sees reasons, and

and hath desires thereto.

7. A seventh spring or occasions of doubtings may be fruitlesse indeavours: I call them so, because we thinke them so: What is that? This it is; When we find out defects in our particular graces, and in particular duties, or some effects of particular corruptions; and have gone to God by Prayer, and in his Ordinances, so that we have a long time prayed for the filling up and inlarging of our weak faith, love, sorrow, joy, assurance, and prayed against that hardnesse, passionatenesse, or whatsoever sinfulness observed in the heart: And yet we seeme to be still where we were, wee creep on with the same impotencies in grace, and move on with the same burdens of sinfull motions and propensions: O now the soule sits downe with much sorrow, and with dole-

A seventh  
cause of  
doubtings



Esa. 16. 12

dolefull conclusions: Well, it is in vaine to seeke any more, God will make that good to me which he threatned unto *Moab*, *Esay 16. 12.* *He shall come unto his Sanctuary, and shall not prevaile.* I have sought him a long time and have not pre-vailed; I shall never rise above these risings: If God had a purpose to doe me good, I should have beene sped ere this.

The opinion of succeslesnesse must needs cause doubtings, because,

Three  
things in  
this.

1. God seems to have a controversie with the soule; Surely, faith the heart, something is the matter that I cannot have audience, all is not right and eaven twixt God and mee.

2. The very stayes and supports of duty seeme to faile us. You know that the Promises are the great encouragements of  
of

of all our services ; and what have we to bind God but his owne Promises, by which he hath bound himselfe? He hath said that hee will *heare*, and *answer* ; Upon which assurance of his, we came in, and prayed, but cannot get any thing, though we presse God upon his owne promise ; Whereupon the soule is brought to a stand, If God will not answer his owne word, how shall he answer me ?

3. Now we suspect not our petitions, but our persons, and uncomfortably judge or feare, that we have been deceived in our progresse towards heaven : God would be to us as to his, (a God hearing Prayers) if we had been to God as his, serving him with a perfect heart, for *God heareth not sinners*, *Joh. 9. 31.* But *If any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.* Whereupon the soule

*Joh. 9. 31.*



Psal. 66. 18

soule strongly argues against it selfe, My heart is sinfull, or else my prayers had been successful; I regard iniquity in my heart, therefore it is that the Lord heares me not, *Psalm. 66. 18.*

Observe  
3. things.

Beloved, you who deale with observation and experience can acknowledge

1. That there are spaces twixt our prayers and Gods answers: God hearkens what *David* speaks, and *David* must hearken what God will speak: Prayer is our angle, our feed, our dove, our messenger, it doth not alwayes take at first, it doth not returne us alwayes a present harvest, it comes in sooner, and sometimes later, it waits the time of the master.

2. God is wise in causing these spaces, hee hath ends, singular ends both for his owne glory, and for the good

good of our Graces.

But thirdly, corruption takes occasion hereby, and Satan vents his envious malice hereupon: As the back-biters, and slanderers, and contentious spirits, who love to set variance twixt faithfull friends, let the least occasion happen, a wry look, a misplaced word, a misintended neglect, a forbearing of present dispatch in some desired service; let these fall out, presently the back-biter, envious, malicious, contentious spirit, catcheth; Loe, you see his love, his backwardnesse, his sleighting of you, &c.

Thus doe our corrupt hearts and Satan; Looke you now, you see how needlesse, how fruitlesse all the care and service of God is; Alas, he thinks not on you, he regards not your prayers: If he had loved you, if he intended to do you good, could this be? would he have held

*Simile.*

Hence Davids Why is the Lord so far from bearing?  
&c. Is his mercy clean gone?  
&c.



held up after so many prayers, so many tears, so many importunities, so many pressings by his mercies, by his Christ, by his promises? No, no, Thou art not in favour with God, his mercies, his promises belong not to thee, &c. Thus they.

The  
eighth  
cause of  
doubtings.

8. An eighth spring may be, imbecillity of judgement about the essentials of salvation; And assuredly, here lies the great spring of doubtings. An erroneous mind is the forge which hammers all our suspicions; it is the wombe which beares and breeds all our feares; If it doth not find, yet it makes all our knots for us.

What one speaks of a plain place of Scripture, This verse, said he, had been easie, had not Commentators made it so knotty; That we say of a Christians condition, It is gracious, happy,

happy, cleare, sure, did not erroneous judgements disturbe, and vexe, and unsettle them. This is true, that a weake judgement and a tender conscience are seldome without feare and doubting. You see it in the *Romans*, about practi-  
call matters, whereupon the Apostle presseth the stronger *not to receive the weak to doubtfull disputations*; and if they had a particular faith, to keepe it unto themselves, knowing well, how weak judgements, like weak plants, are easily stirred and shaken.

You may see it also in the *Ephesians*, about doctrinall matters; for *Paul* giving an *Item* unto them to *overthrow their childishnesse*, *Eph. 4. 14.* he doth paraphrase it to be such an estate wherein men are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind, &c.

Two things are incident unto

Rom. 14. 1  
22.

Eph. 4. 14.

Two  
things  
incident  
to this.



unto shallow judgements, (by vertue of which they are objected (with ease) unto doubtings.

1. One is, They have not been conversant in the compasse of Truths, there be some Truths which yet they know not; they have not all their holds and strength.

2. New Doctrines contrary to old Truths, are not so easily over-mastered by their understandings, but doe either win misbelief, or else disturb their true believe. You shall scarce heare any new things started, but withall we heare of many persons startled, as if their faith had hitherto been in vaine; for tender consciences are apt to beleeve the most, and therefore sometimes doe beleeve those points which are false.

A man must have good eyes to find out cunning glosses.

Instances.

Shall I give you instances amongst our selves? 1. One is an equality of humiliation before

fore conversion : as if no man were truly converted, who hath not equalled the greatest penitent in the highest degrees of contrition and terror. And hence it is that many distressed, bowed, broken soules, doe exceedingly labour to grinde themselves, and to fall into the flames of horrible fears, thereby to assure themselves of a good estate : Whereas, 1. All Christians are not equall in their preparations. 2. No man can judge his estate at all, simply, by legall humiliation.

2. A full assurance at first, or else no faith : As if *Jacobs* ladder had no degrees, and the Sun at his first peeping were in the height of heaven ; Or that a Scholar must be placed in the upper forme, as soone as he enters the Schoole. Such inconsiderate deliveries as these, they trouble the faith of many, (as the Apostle speaks of those

*Simile.*



those in 2 *Tim.* 2. 18.) If faith cannot be without full assurance, then I am no Beleever, saith *David*, for I had my faintings; Nor I, saith *Peter*, for Christ himselfe tels you, I had my doubtings.

It is a most vaine and dangerous way for any Divine or ordinary Christian to impose Rules, and to deliver a thing as a dogmaticall and common truth, which he or he have in a speciall way onely observed in themselves: The Spirit of God bestows upon all the Elect of God, the same substantiall frame of grace; but the making up, and the making out of these, is different: As, No man must say he hath no soule, because he feels not those particular workings of reason and desire which another doth; So, No man must conclude another to be out of the estate of Grace, if haply there

*Simile.*

there be not a plenary answerableness in them both, for every method and measure of working grace.

Therefore let me caveat a little here, to you who are growne Christians: Remember that there are some who are weak, yet true members of the same body: and doe not you indiscreetly insist upon your onely personall experiences, & those only in some particulars, in all companies, because you have (perhaps) risen high, therefore none are right, who are below you: Consult the Scriptures, and deliver us what it directs, and wherein it supports: You know not yet the aptnesses in tender consciences to throw downe themselves, and to catch at matters and arguments of trouble. Thou sendest (perhaps) from thy company, a poore, a laden and troubled heart, with a bitter

An Item  
to the  
stronger  
Christians



ter and amazed opinion, that it hath now no faith, which yet came unto thee with some weak and strong desires of firmer faith.

Weak judgements (as I said before) cannot bear all things, but (like some mens stomacks) are presently oppressed with meats unusuall: And when we have mistaken an error for truth, it may prove to the soule as the mistaking of poison for medicine, a businesse of troublesome and dangerous consequence.

A ninth  
cause of  
doubtings.

9. Ignorance of the Doctrine of Justification; This is another cause of doubting.

Rom. 5. 18

The Doctrine of Justification is a Doctrine of Life. *Rom.*

Rom. 5. 1.

*5. 18. The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. And it is a Doctrine of Peace, Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, &c. And therefore the ignorance of it must*

must needs be a cause of feare and doubting.

Here consider foure things.

1. The Christian condition is subject to many sensible impressions : Wee are seldome without assault or combat ; and those pierce us most which the conscience throws up. A man may beare any wound with more ease, then that which he hath given himselfe. When the Law powerfully reveals, and the Conscience closely applyes the guilt of our nature and lives, now it is a sad and heavy time. *Job* cryes out in the sense of this sting, *Chap. 13. 26. Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possesse the iniquities of my youth.* *Solomon* tels us that the wounded spirit is hardly sustained, *Prov. 18. 14.* *David* is even dyled up by his roaring, and werne away with the paine of it. And *Paul* cryes out  
as

Foure things.

Sensible guilt is troublesome, as a disease when one is awakened.

*Job 13. 26*

*Pro. 18. 14*

*David.*

*Paul.*



Some-  
thing to  
answer &  
account  
for it.

*Simile.*

as a man almost lost, *Rom. 7.*

2. The soule makes out at such a time for some stay and help: It seeks where it may lay his burden, and find something to ease and deliver. It is with a sick soule as with a sick body, which turnes from one side to another, from this part to the other part of the bed and of the pillow, and craves help of this friend and of another, would have ease from any, but perchance can get none from all.

Here is sin, saith the person; here is a sinfull soule, and there is a righteous Law broken, and a righteous God offended, who yet must and will be satisfied: He calls upon me, and hath arrested my Conscience; Now good Lord, what shall I doe? I have nothing to pay, or that can give satisfaction. *Where- with shall I come before the Lord, and bow my selfe before the high God?*

God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a yeare old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oyle? Shall I give my first-borne for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soule? q. d. Those are nothing, those can doe nothing; my sins are many, great, deep; my righteousness is none, or too weak to answer for my unrighteousness: All the good I have, or can doe, cannot expiate the evill which I have done, or make up that good which I should have. Here is some sorrow, but what is that? it is but as a drop to the Ocean of guilt which lies upon mee: Here is some duty, but what is that? it is defective in it selfe, and no amends to the many thousands of breaches which I have made.

3. The soule cannot stay it

E

selfe

Micah 6.

6, 7.

Nothing  
in our  
selves.



selfe upon it selfe : God calls for satisfaction ; I have it not faith the soule : God will have satisfaction : Lord ! what shall I now doe ? The Conscience works upon us , and tels us , God is just , and if these sins be not pardoned , and a righteousness found and presented , we are lost. Now the soule is at a stand , seriously and sadly be-thinks , What have I ? Nothing but sin , yet sin cannot answer for sin : Perhaps some imperfect holinesse , but that cannot make up a perfect satisfaction.

O my brethren ! our blood and spirits must needs goe and come , when the arrest is upon us , and none appears to bayle us : when the ship is split , and no rock is neare to save us : when the sentence of death is read against us , and none is at hand to pardon us : when the Avenger of blood pursues us ,  
and

and no city of refuge opens to shelter us : unrighteousnesse, inability, and Conscience and God meet, and none yet, nothing is yet found to answer for us, or to pacifie us.

4. Without us there is something able to stay us, of which the soule being ignorant, is still perplexed : it cannot conclude its feares, and scruples, and doubts.

What is that ?

I answer, Justification is the stay, and therefore the soule must needs be burdened, being unacquainted with it :

As,

1. Till we know where to lay downe our sinfull burden, we must needs be troubled : If a perplexed soule could finde any to charge his debts upon, who would beare and answer for him, then it might have rest : Now Christ in Justification takes our guilt upon him:

E 2

As

*Ob.*

*Sol.*

Three things.



Philem. 18

As Paul said to Philemon concerning his servant Onesimus, *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that upon mine account* : So saith Christ to the broken and laden sinner, *If thou hast any guilt, and sinfull debts to be answered for unto God, put them upon mine account* ; If thou hast wronged my Father, I will make all eaven, look for thy discharge and acquittance by me ; for *I was made sin for thee, that thou mightest be made the righteousness of God in me*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. and God was in me, (ver. 19.) reconciling the world unto himselfe, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; And 1 Joh. 2. 1. *If any man sin, he hath an Advocate with the Father, &c.*

2 Cor. 5. 21

19.

1 Joh. 2. 1.

2. Till we know our justifying righteousness, we cannot but be troubled : That righteousness which justifies us, is not in us : No righteousness

nesse justifies, but that which is every way perfect and full; now this is in Christ, and not in us. *Rom. 5. 19. By the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous.* When a sinner is to stand before God for acceptance and life, he stands not before him in his owne rags, but in the garment of his eldest Brother: He cannot say, Lord, here is a righteousness in me which hath fulfilled thy Law; here is a righteousness in mee, against which thou canst make no exception; here is a righteousness in me, for which thou art to account and pronounce me just: But this he may say, Lord, though I have no perfect righteousness to answer thee, yet thy Sonne hath for me, and he is made unto me from thy selfe, my *righteousnesse, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption,* 1 Cor. 1. 30. And being justified by faith  
 E 3 in

Rom. 5. 19

1 Cor. 1. 30



init, he may have *peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5. 19.*

Brethren, no man can be free from strong feares and doubts, who thinks to be acquitted or condemned by what is in himselfe: If a man thinks this, The Lord will or doth enter into judgement with me, and I finde nothing to satisfie him; all the powers of my heart, and of my graces are insufficient, and therefore there is now no hope but I shal be cast and condemned; you see here is ground of doubtings: yet if a man could look out of himselfe, and know that his righteousness is to be found in Christ, and God hath appointed it so, that I am to be justified by that righteousness onely; now the soul may have a stay to rest on: Yet my Saviours righteousness was perfect, was accepted, and he is mine.

mine, and his righteousness is mine.

3. Till we know the dispositions (if I may so speak) in God about our justifying, we cannot but doubt: for a man reasoneth thus: I have committed great sins, which now do grieve me, and I hate them, and I have left them, but I know not how they may be pardoned; those will now cause doubtings. Untill wee know that God for Christ will justify us frō great sins, as well as small, 1 Cor 6. 8, 9. and that he blots out the thick cloud, as well as the cloud, *Esa* 44. 22.

*I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins:* and that there were expiatory sacrifices not onely for infirmities, but also for enormities, all which typified the vertue of the blood of Christ, which justifies from great sins, &c.

1 Cor. 6.

8, 9, 10.

*Esa*. 44. 22



*Ob.*

But I have nothing to move God to pardon them.

*Sol.*

Esa 43. 25

Eph. 1. 7.

Yet pardoning is a gracious work : God pardons sins, not for thy sake, but for his owne sake. *Esay 43. 25. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine owne sake : and for his Christs sake, Eph. 1. 7. In whom onely we have redemption, even the forgivenesse of our sinnes.*

*Ob.*

But God will call me hereafter to account again, though for a while he seems to be graciously pleased.

*Sol.*

Jer. 31. 34

No, the Lord in his new Covenant of Grace assures the contrary : *Jer. 31. 34. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sinne no more.* So that you manifestly see, how the ignorance of our Justification leaves the soule in great doubtings, because, 1. A man knows not where to cast his burden. 2. Where to find his righ-

righteousnesse. 3. What is the vertue, and fulnesse, and love, and graciousnesse, the fidelity and irrevocablenesse of God in justifying a sinner by Christ.

10. A tenth cause of doubtings, is disputation against the Promises: You have heard (heretofore) that the ignorance of the Promises is an occasion of doubting: and now I am to shew you, that the arguing of the soule against them, is also another cause.

But you will say, Doth any man dare to dispute against Gods Promises?

I answer, The Promises may be considered, 1. In respect of their absolute truth and goodness: thus they are not disputed against, unlesse by Atheists and positive unbelievers, as were those scoffers, 2 Pet. 3.4. who said, *Where is the promise of his coming?*

A tenth  
cause of  
doubtings.

*Ob.*

*Sol.*

The Pro-  
mises con-  
sidered  
two wayes



2. In respect of their application and extent: Thus many weak beleivers are subject to argue against them: Not, whether they be verity and mercy; not, whether righteousness and peace doe meet in them; but, whether these doe reach to them, and may be applied by them. Nay, that is not all, they do oftentimes upon unjust grounds thrust away the Promises from themselves.

And now the soule must needs be hurried with feares and doubtings, in case the condition be sensible, because

Three reasons of it.

*Simile.*

1. The Promises are to faith as ground unto the Anchor; cast out an Anchor, and if it hath not ground to fasten, or hitch in, the Ship rowls still: This is a truth, If faith cannot pitch and fixe, the soule cannot be quiet and settled. *David* in one place useth the comparison of a bird, that his soule did

did hye unto God, as a bird unto her nest. Whiles the bird is in the ayre, it is hovering, and flying, and restlesse; so is it with the soule, untill faith can settle it under the wings of a Promise.

Noahs  
dove found  
no rest for  
the sole of  
her foot.

Nay, againe, the Promises are called *the breasts of consolation*: When the child is hungry, and distempered, nothing quiets it but the breasts: And assuredly, if the Promises doe not still the soule, nothing can.

Now when a man will rove from this ground of faith, when he will fly from his rest, when he refuseth the breasts of consolation, no marvaile if his soule be full of doubts and feares: For this is all one, as if a lame man should throw away his crutches, or a weak man his staffe, or a sick man his cordials, or a sinking man the bough which holds him up.  
The



Psa. 27. 13

The goodnesse of the Lord (promised to *David*) was that which did hold up all his faintings ; and so all Gods people have still been held and staffed up by Gods Word: And therefore that person must needs be full of doubts, who withdraws his shoulder from such a stay and rock, upon which hee should leane and rest himselfe.

2. This is but selfnesse, which is ever accompanied with unquietnesse : for why dost thou refuse to apply those Promises which God hath made? Is it not because, 1. Thou wouldst have more goodnesse first, 2. Lesse unbeliefe first? And is not this a self-seeking, yea, in some sort a self-standing? What an odde and unseemly method of worshiping of God is this? Lord, I have but weak grace, and thou hast promised to strengthen it, and perfect

**Note.**  
So thou  
hast pro-  
mised to  
pardon  
sins, &c.

perfect and finish it, but I will not beleeve thy Promise belongs to me; untill I have first a greater increase of my grace. Or thus, Lord, I find much unevennesse in duty, and thou hast promised to give thy Spirit, which shall cause mee to walk in thy way, but I will not beleeve this Promise, untill I be first more enabled in duty. Or thus, Lord, I find much sinfulness in me, and thou hast promised to change & cleanse the heart, and to subdue iniquity, but I will not beleeve this Promise, untill first I see my sins subdued: When I find my graces increased, then I will beleeve that thou wilt increase them; when I find my obedience continued, and my sinnes subdued, then will I beleeve that thou wilt cause me to walk, and wilt subdue sins. *q. d.* If thou wilt performe thy Promise before I doe beleeve thy

When thou hast done it, then I will beleeve that thou wilt doe it.



*Simile.*

thy Promise, then I will beleeve thy Promise. This is as if a man would see the blood in the veines, before the veins are opened; or wash his hands cleane, before he hath turned the cock to let out the water.

3. A man is still held by the powers of his corruption: And where corruptions, or wants are still found in their former measure, there the tender soule will doubt and feare.

*Simile.*

Let a man bestow himselfe much in hearing, or much in praying, or much in conferring, yet if he have the art of thrusting away the Promises, he will be still as he was: v. g. Suppose a man to be sick, call unto his help a Colledge of Physitians, let them consult upon his estate, prescribe the most fitting potions, & quickning cordials, and when the patient hath heard them, hee refuseth their prescriptions, he will

will not take them, but saith, These belong not to me; will his disease at all abate?

So is it with us; when wee heare, or reade, or confer, and many Promises fall in to our help, if yet we put them aside, we now keep up our sinfulness, our weaknesse, and therefore keep up our doubtings and distrusts.

But you will say, All Promises are not applyable by all men in all conditions, and therefore good reason for us to hold off.

To which (briefly) thus much: Though all Promises cannot be applyed by all men at one time, yet some Promises may be applyed by an humbled and sensible sinner at some time or other. *v. g.*

Suppose thou feeles the power of sin stirring in its motions and workings, and (as *Paul* complains) leading thee captive,

*Ob.*

*Sol.*

*Note.*



captive; though every Promise cannot now be applyed, yet thou dost ill in not fasting on the Promises of Mortification, which are made for this end, that the sensible and weary sinner should lay hold on them for the subduing of his sins.

Againe, suppose thou findest weaknesse of Grace, (that thou canst not doe the good that thou wouldst doe) dost thou now well to thrust away the Promises of assistance and strengthning, by saying, What is that to me, if God hath said, *I will uphold, and I will strengthen, and My grace is sufficient, and My power shall be manifest in weaknesse?*

So againe, suppose thou feelest the guilt of sin, piercing and afflicting thy conscience, and God hath promised to pardon iniquities, transgressions, and sins, and to love freely, and

to receive graciously, dost thou now well or wisely, to thrust away the pardoning Promises, and say, What are they to such a one as I am? If any begger should say, What is that to me, that there are bountifull almes at the rich mans gate? Or a Malefactor, What is that to me, that the Prince will pardon Traitors? Or a sensible sinner, What is that to me, that Christ did die for sinnes, and God will be merciful to returning sinners? &c.

II. An eleventh cause of doubtings may be the suspension of divine favour: When God holds up his countenance, the light of it from shining into the heart, so that a Christian doth not enjoy his day as before, his God as before, in the sensible evidences of his loving favour, now the soule may (possibly) fall into singular distrusts and fears. See it in David,

Eleventh  
cause of  
doubtings.



Psal. 30. 7.

*David, Psal. 30. 7. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountaine to stand strong ; Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled.*

Luk. 2. 48.

A Christians life, is in some respect, like a Courtiers, who is neare his Prince, upon his countenance or forbearance all his comforts or discomforts doe depend. We may say of him, what *Mary* spake, when she lost Christ, *Luke 2. 48. Behold, thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing, (i.)* with an heavy heart. So, &c. But,

Ob.

How appeares it that this suspension of divine favour should occasion our doubting?

Sol.

Thus.

Foure things.

Psal. 30. 5.

1. Gods favour is the greatest good ; *Thy favour is life, Psal. 30. 5.* He there expresseth Gods favour by that good which of us is most desirable : Nay, *Thy favour is better then life, Psal. 63. 3.* Therefore hee cryes

63. 3.

cryes out, *Psal. 36.7. O how excellent is thy loving kindnesse!* and prayes, *ver. 10. O continue thy loving kindnesse.* And *Psal. 106.4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people,* 5. *That I may see the good of thy chosen, &c.*

*Psal. 36.7.*

10

*106.4.*

5.

Now the sensible absence of the greatest good, must needs imprint the motions of greatest feare, and suspicion, and trouble as you may see in *David, Psal. 77. 3, 7, &c.* For now the glory seemes to be departed from *Israel.*

2. Againe, In these times nothing can comfort the soul, or stay it without much difficulty: Our very graces will hardly uphold us. You know that if the King clouds his countenance, they are not the dignities conferred which will content us; they are not our revenews & possessions which will cheare us: So is it with us, when

*Simile.*



when God draws up his loving countenance; They are not our riches, or our gifts, or our graces, or our services, which can delight us; These doe it, whiles in them we see Gods love shining towards us; but if that draw back, these are all put to a strait: All is nothing to *David*, whiles hee is under this enquiry, *Will the Lord be favourable no more?*  
*Psal. 77.7.*

*Psal. 77.7.*

3. God doth seldome draw up his favour, but for some unkindnesse on our part: Our sins (ordinarily) are the clouds which hide his face from us; they are the wall of separation: perhaps some great sin, as *David*s; perhaps some carelesse esteems of him, speaking in his Ordinances; perhaps some sleight passing by of his secret motions and counsels; As the Church, *Cant. 5.2. Open to mee my sister, my love, my dove, my*

*Cant. 5.2.*

undefiled, &c. To which voice of Christ, how doth the Church demeane her selfe?

3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? At length, though ver. 6. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe and was gone; my soule fayled, &c.*

3.

How can the soule but be greatly trouled, when it hath turned its day into night, and shut up that light which once it injoyed to its great comfort and solace? *Woman, why weepest thou? (said Christ to Mary, Job. 20. 15.) Because (said she) they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him: So may we justly weep, when our finnes have taken away our God from us in his comfortable favour, and we cannot easily regaine him, and find him.*

4. These times of suspension, ordinarily are times of tryall:



tryall: wherein God leaves the Christian to some notable combats, and to the great exercises of Graces; at which time, corruptions and tentations will stir, and therefore no marvaile if they be times mixt with some feares and doubtings.

The  
twelfth  
cause of  
doubtings.

12. Another spring of doubtings, is, the crediting of Satāns testimony touching our estate; when we rest upon his judgement, and see our conditions through his informations.

*Simile.*

You know that objects are diversly represented unto the eye; Sometimes from themselves in their proper nature, as when a man sees a green colour as it is; sometimes mediately, by other things, as when a green colour is seen through a red glasse; now it doth not appeare in its native colour, but in the likenesse of that through which it is perceived:

ved : So is it with our spirituall estate.

Sometimes it is represented unto us, as it is truly existing ; and thus we shall see it, when we look upon it, and judge of it by the word of God : And sometimes it is represented unto us, not as it is, but as it appears in some corrupt and deceiveable testimonies and reports unto us : As *Josephs* chastity appeared to his Master under the nature of abominable uncleanness, when he took the testimony of it from his filthy wife : So shall our most innocent & upright frame appeare unto us to be nothing else but basest hypocrisie, if we put the issue of it upon Satans informations: For as Satan hath an art to colour over the true condition of sinfull bondage, keeping close & in covert the proper image, or (rather) deformity of it :

So

*Ioseph.*



So he hath a delusion too, in hiding from our eyes the true powers of gracious sincerity, and fetching up to the judgement all our weaknesse and present imperfections, with all former knowne evils, with which he doth so totally possesse the mind, that it can hardly see any thing that good is in it selfe, or if it doth, yet it sees so much corruption and imperfection, as that it is ready almost to turne the scale and ballance.

And here our crafty enemy ceaseth not, but taking the advantage of a tender conscience, he exaggerates upon us the large distance of this condition in which we now are, from that which God commands and expects, and hath found in some of his righteous servants; in the citation of whose piety he is not very sparing, that by the consideration  
of

of their fulnesse and our owne emptinesse, wee might the more easily suspect our condition, and credit his relations.

Which if we once doe, *Bone Deus!* into what labyrinths doe we wind our selves? into what fears? into what doubts? We shall never set out to believe any Promise, but hee checks us back with the hollownesse of our condition; we shall never set upon any ordinance or duty, but he foyles us with suspicions (at least) that all is in vaine, God will not blesse and prosper his Ordinances unto such; And in those Ordinances, if any matter of bitternesse or uncomfortablenesse be delivered, he brings home that to us, and tels the soule, This is thy portion.

Now where our estate rests upon a deceitfull informer, where we take things as Satan

F                      makes



makes them, where we judge of sin as he pleads it, and of Gods love to us as he conveys it, and of Gods Promises as he interprets them to us, and of our owne Graces, and holy temper, as he cleares and evidenceth them unto us, there can be nothing but jealousies, feares, distractions, and daily doubtings in the heart.

A thirteenth  
spring.

13. Another spring may be some new risings of old sinnes after humiliation, and some singular assurance of their pardon.

Psal. 25.7.

David gives a touch at this (I think) Psal. 25.7. when he prayes, *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.* So doth Job, 13.26. *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possesse the iniquities of my youth.*

Job 13.26

Simile.

It would trouble us to see a man rise up out of his grave, (who hath been buried a long time)

time) and now to haunt us: So these sins which we have long since committed, and long since bewailed, and long since renounced, and after long humiliations their discharge hath been obtained; to meet these sins (like an enemy with a sword in his hand) with guilt in their faces and countenances againe, this will amaze the soule, it will appale it, and startle it, and make us more then once to sigh and inquire, Why is it so?

Two things will now fall in-  
to question.

Two  
things.

1. The reality of pardon: Where God saith, he *pardons sinne*, there he saith, that he will *remember it no more*: But it seemes he doth remember it, (else how comes it thus upon me as a debt not yet discharged, as a guilt not yet removed?) and if he doth thus remember it against me, I much



feare, that as yet the Book is not crossed, this sin is not pardoned. Upon which, something else may fall in ; If this sinne be not pardoned, perhaps the rest are not ; and if this be risen up against me, how can I tel but all the rest may (afresh) set themselves in array, and give a second charge upon my conscience too ?

Esay 1.16.

18.

2. The reality of Repentance : For where God calls for sound repentance, (as *Esay 1.16. Wash you, make you cleane, put away the evill of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to doe evill*) there God doth promise, (*ver. 18.*) that *Though our sins be as scarlet, yet they shall be as white as snow ; and though they be red like crimson, yet they shall be as wooll* : in which words are expressed a plaine change of the sinfull condition ; our sins shall not be what and as once they were.

Where-

Whereupon the soule mis-  
gives for its part: God will  
doe what he hath promised,  
if I had done what I was in-  
joynd. If my sins had beene  
truly left, they had been fully  
discharged; but now I possesse  
them againe in their guilt,  
and therefore I exceedingly  
feare that I did overtly dis-  
charge my selfe of them in my  
repentance. If Christ had slain  
them by his blood, or if I had  
drowned them by true sorrow  
and repentance, they could  
not thus revive in their guilt,  
but I feare that I did onely  
skin over these sores, which I  
feelee now to break out, or that  
I laid them asleep onely, and  
not dead, because they awake  
upon me with such terrour and  
clamour: And if so, then there  
hath been a long and fruitlesse  
veine of rotten hypocrisie in  
me; & whereas I had thought  
my work almost finished, I am

Note.



as yet to begin againe.

Beloved, this is a secret and piercing fountaine of strong fears and doubtings, especially when the sins rise up, and set on us afresh after a course of humiliation, and some singular assurance of their pardon: and yet it is the case of many Christians, incident unto them in their dayes of great losses, or sicknesses, or death.

A fourteenth  
cause.

14. Another spring or occasion may be some long silences in the conscience.

God (you know) hath set in our selves, our Law-giver, our Judge, and our Witnesse: Conscience doth sustaine, and should discharge the offices of all these: In a doubtfull day it should cleare our condition, and witnesse for us against the testimony of Satan, and of our owne feares: And therefore God hath given unto it an excusing and comforting power,  
as

as you may see, *Rom. 2. 15.*  
*Their thoughts excusing one ano-*  
*ther, or accusing. And 2 Cor. 1.*  
*12. Our rejoycing is this, the te-*  
*stimony of our conscience, that in*  
*simplicity and godly sincerity, &c.*

Here consider some parti-  
 culars,

1. Concerning Testi-  
 monie.

2. Concerning our Con-  
 dition.

1. There is a three-fold te-  
 stimony about our estate;

1. One is from the Spirit,  
 which shines in the renewed  
 heart by an unspeakable light,  
 and manifests unto it the  
 things given unto it of God,  
 and so seals, and witnesseth the  
 truth and goodnesse of our  
 particular interests in God and  
 Christ, according to the word  
 of God. 2. Another is from  
 faith, which doth testifie the  
 interests of the soule in that  
 happinesse which it finds re-

A three-  
 fold testi-  
 mony.

1 Cor. 2. 12



\* By assurance.

vealed in the Word : For that which faith beleeves by a direct act in the Word, it may testifie of the same to the person by a reflexive \* act. 3. A third is from Conscience, which beholding the simplicity and godly sincerity of the heart, testifies unto it (against all opposition) that this blessed frame is in the soule; and this testimony being concordant with that of the word, the soul is thereby greatly sustained, forasmuch as this is knowne before, *viz.* A sincere temper is happy; and now Conscience clearing that temper, the soule hereupon is much cheered.

2. Our condition falls under a three-fold consideration.

A three-fold estate.

1. Sometimes under the accusations of Conscience: Conscience doth speak and testifie, but it is either that our hearts are totally base, and sinfull, and

and corrupt, or that in such and such a particular it is not right, it was not perfect, but sinfull and degenerating.

2. Sometimes under the excusations of Conscience: where Conscience testifies, and acquits, and speaks peace, either about the frame of the heart, or rectitude of some particular action and course.

3. Sometimes under a neutrall act or work of the Conscience: (*i.*) The Conscience (like *Absolom* to *Amnon*, 2 *Sam.* 13. 22.) speaks unto a person neither good nor bad: It doth not accuse him, nor doth it excuse him; it doth not speak terror, nor doth it speak peace; it doth not charge any speciall guilt, nor doth it give us a particular discharge of any.

Now this is the time of fears and doubts; I will shew you why: because,

1. A negative state satisfies

F 5

not

As in  
*Paul*, loc.  
*cit.*

As in *Da-  
vid* about  
*Saul*.



not a tender Christian; It doth not satisfie a tender soule, that God looks not like an enemy, unlesse also he looks as a friend; or that Conscience doth not check, but that it should excuse. It doth trouble us many times, that in our exemptions from trouble, wee yet find no Peace-speaker.

2. It gives suspicion of a neutrall estate: because Conscience seems to behave it selfe as a neutrall, neither against us, nor for us. I call that a neutrall estate, which is not eminently evill; it hath some good in it, and doth some good, but is not so good as to be gracious: therefore the civill estate is a neutrall; it doth not rise to be so bad as the worst, nor to be so good as the best people are. Now this estate (absolutely considered) is bad, it is an evill estate, it is an estate in which  
if

if a man lives and dies, (and goes not beyond it) he cannot be saved.

3. It may breed an expectation of the worse testimony of Conscience; for withdrawments are (sometimes) the forerunners of some bitter intentions: It fell out ill with *Saul*, when God withdrew himselfe from him: So when Conscience withdraws, perhaps my Conscience hath found matter against me; and as it doth not now speak peace, so (perhaps) shortly it may speak bitter things unto me.

4 Nay, Conscience is Gods Vice-gerent, it is his Deputy, and therefore in the silences and withdrawments of it, wee look through and feare the disposition of God himself towards us; because the servants do ordinarily expresse the conceits, and inclinations, and affections of their masters: And  
this



Conscience is the  
looking-  
glasse.

this is certaine; that we doe in an angry conscience behold alwayes an angry God, and so in a cheerfull conscience a gracious God, and so shall we in a silent conscience suspect a doubtfull God : We doe ordinarily judge how God is towards us by what we find and feele Conscience to be towards us : This is the glasse in which we see his favours or frowns.

These are the springs of Doubtings, which I have enlarged in their opening unto you ; it is likely there may be more then these, (I could also deliver you more about the temporall estate ; but that is out of our scope and compasse now) It now remains that I descend to the closing up of these springs, to the cures and remedies of these Doubtings, which is the last thing proposed.

C A P.

## CAP. V.

*The Cures and Remedies of  
Doubtings.*

**H**ere lies our next and greatest work: And therefore as Physitians in this part are more cautelous to administer things which are in their qualities most proper, and in their measures most convenient; so must we in the healings and closings of the spirituall distempers of the soule. And therefore that this work may be happily performed, I shall (desiring Gods grace to assist and blesse) prescribe unto you,

1. The particular cures which shall answer all those particular springs of doubtings before mentioned. Then 2. The generall Cures and Remedies which may extend to the help of all, or most of our doubtings, if time and leasure hold out.

*The*

Two sorts  
of cures,  
Particular,  
Generall.



*The particular Cures.*

The first  
cure, an-  
swering  
the first  
cause of  
doubtings.

Rom. 8. 13

*Similies.*

Heb. 10. 22

1. Naturall corruption was the first spring of Doubtings, and Mortification is the first help and remedy: That is the Disease, and this is the Cure. I may say that of our faith, which the Apostle speaks of our persons, *Rom. 8. 13. If yee through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* The more our sinnes doe die in us, the more our faith will live in us. We are diseased men, (take us in our best condition) and you know the more any disease doth lose of its strength, the more doth our health rise up and thrive: and so we are as a garden which hath many plants, and severall weeds, the abating of these, the rooting up, and killing of these contributes the greater reliefe and strengthening to our plants.

The Apostle (*Heb. 10. 22.*)  
would

would have them to *draw neare with a true heart in full assurance of Faith* : he would have them to cast out their doubtings in their approaches unto God, he would have them to come with assurance, with a full assurance ; to come so, as verily to be perswaded of Gods acceptance of them ; not indifferently to come with, May be I shall be accepted, may be I shall not ; this is a doubtfull approaching. But what doth he adjoyne to this exhortation ? Observe the next words, *Having your hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience. q. d.* As long as your hearts are evill, as long as Conscience can charge you for entertained evill, you will be wavering and doubtfull ; But if your hearts were sprinkled, if the evill of sin were washed from them, then you might come with a full assurance of faith,

(i.)



(i.) Then faith might fully perswade you to come confidently unto God; for Faith cannot well perswade, if Conscience can yet truely charge and condemne.

1 Joh. 3. 21

Therefore saith S. John, *If our hearts condemne us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

(i.) If sin be mortified, if conscience finds no sinne harboured, but condemned; if it cannot condemne us for not condemning our sins; then wee have confidence towards God:

(i.) Then if we come to God in Prayer, and aske any thing of him in the Name of Christ, Faith may confidently rest upon it, that God doth heare, and will answer. *Whatsoever wee aske, we receive of him,*  
 22. *ver. 22.*

There are two effects of our finnes.

1. They keepe downe our faith. *I am so troubled* (saith Da-

*David) that I cannot look up. See the place, Psal. 40. 12. Innumerable evils have compassed mee about: Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to look up: They are more then the haire of my head; therefore my heart faileth me.* You see here that his finnes made his heart to faile, to misgive it selfe; and like a heavy rheume they fell on his eyes, that hee could not well look up. They are a hinderance to faith, our naturall inclination is a very clog unto the spirit of faith; and when faith would doe some good for us, it ever (like a malicious person) throws in doubts & scruples, and breeds with-holding arguments and reasonings against the Truths and Promises of God.

2. They make the encouragements of faith to be difficult; they keep off the things which would edge & quicken  
our

Psal. 40. 12

Two effects of sin.

By contrary reasonings and denyals.



our faith. As *Peter* said in another case, *Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinfull man*; So the heart here, God is or will depart from me, because I am such a sinner; He will not hear my prayer, because of my sins; nor be gracious to me, because of my sins; nor may I pitch upon his Promises, because of my sins.

Now consider, if that which did keep downe faith in respect of its proper inclination, (for faith naturally bends upward) and in respect of its operation, that it cannot exercise it selfe without interruption, were removed; would not faith be higher? If the chain and bolts were off, if the rheume were dryed, should we not walk better, should we not look better? Againe, If the encouragements of faith were kept close to faith, if faith could see them, and dwell upon

upon them, would not our doubtings sinke? Therefore it is more then evident that our doubtings would sink, if our naturall corruption did sinke, if our sinfull lusts did sinke, which doe breed those indispositions, those interruptions, those continuall difficulties unto our faith. Faith would rise, if its contrary did abate. *Cast out this bond-woman and her son,* (said Sarah to Abraham) *for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heire with my son:* So say I, cast out this bond-woman and her sonne, cast out naturall corruption and infidelity, that Isaac may be alone, that faith may be (as much as may be) alone, and then it will possesse the Promises (and the soule too) with more quietnesse.

Gen. 21.10

But here the soule replyes,  
No question but doubtings  
would sinke, if sinfull corrup-  
tion

Obj.



tion did fall ; If the fountaine did decay, the streams would lessen ; But alas, 1. Who can mortifie his sinfull nature ? 2. What kind of mortifying of it is requisite ? 3. What way may be taken to effect it ?

*Sol.*

I will briefly say something to each of these demands.

*Tu non potes, sed Dominus tuus potest.*

1. To the first, Who can mortifie his sinfull nature ? I answer, Of himselfe, no man can ; naturally he hath neither will nor power thereto : But as *Chrysostome* spake in the businesse of Repentance, Thou canst not turn thee, but yet thy God can turn thee ; That I say here in the businesse of mortifying, Thou canst not mortifie thy sins, but God can doe it : He can doe it for thee, though thou canst not doe it for thy selfe : Though thy naturall corruption be a spreading leprosie, he can heale it : Though it be a violent plague, he can cure

cure it : God hath put enough in Christ to save a sinner, and therefore enough to heale a sinner. Remember one thing, In all commands, the duty is thine, and the power is Gods : He who commands thee to mortifie sinne, is ready enough with sufficient power to effect it, if he be sought unto.

Neverthelesse observe by the way, that Mortification may be effected two wayes ;  
1. Passively, as when the Lord doth infuse holy principles of Grace, which are contrary in their nature and vertue to the nature and power of sin, working out sinfull corruption by degrees. 2. Actively, as when the renewed and converted soule doth by faith successively apply and draw down the crucifying vertues of Jesus Christ ; Though the meere naturall man can doe nothing to the mortification of sinne, yet the  
re-



renewed person having received grace from God, is by the help of Gods Spirit to stir up the grace that is in him, and especially his faith, to trust on Jesus Christ for the further subduings and crucifyings of his sinfull nature.

2. But now for the second demand, What kind of Mortification is most requisite, so as in more measure to free the heart from doubtings? In a word, this; be sure the mortifying be

1. Radicall: lay the axe to the root: As all Graces thrive most when their springs are quickned, so all sinnes decay most when their roots are mortified. Corrupt acts will fall quickly, if a corrupt heart were more sanctified. The strength of sinne is inward, there are the strong holds which need most to be cast downe: By all means set up a cru-

crucifying Christ in thy bosome.

2. Impartiall. It is true, one sin may trouble more then another, but it will be thy wisdom to trouble all sin: Sins are chained together as well as Graces; and one sin serves to help another, and the neglected sinne may perhaps suddenly wound thee, and make thee to stagger. The whole body of sinne in every member of it, must be the object of thy mortifying work: This will testifie the truth of Grace received, and the sincerity of thy conscience, and consequently will remove many bottomes of feares and doubtings.

3. Diurnall: (i) a daily work. Perhaps sometimes thou art fervent in the work, (when conscience is struck, or when afflictions strike thee) but afterwards thou art negligent, and



and then sinne gets strength againe. But as thou shouldst live by faith daily, so thou shouldst die to sinne daily: Watch thy spirit, resist the motion of it, insist on divine promises, implead the strength of Christ every day: Thou shouldst so beleeve still, as if thou never yet hadst enough of Christ; and so live still, as if thou wert to live thy last; and so mortifie sin still as thou didst at the first time wherein God looked on thee.

4. Speciall. If thou wouldst make thy battell strong in any part, doe it then against Infidelity, and whatsoever upholds and contributes unto it. It is granted, that the Radicall principle of thy doubts is originall sinne; but then the immediate principle of it is remaining Infidelity. Out of it immediately come all thy staggerings, and reelings, and questi-

questionings, and doubtings :  
That is it (O weak beleever)  
which disables thy apprehension  
of the Covenant, of Christ,  
of the Promises, of thy Title :  
That is it which perverts thy  
judgment, and mis-perswades  
it with cunning reasonings, so  
that either thou canst not discern  
the full truth of Gods  
Promises, or thou canst not see  
prevailing reasons to perswade  
thy selfe that they belong to  
thee.

Therefore let the main care  
and work of thee be, to strike  
at unbeliefe : Be humbled  
much for it, beseech the Lord  
to cure thee more and more  
of it, to remove the ignorance  
of the Covenant out of thee,  
and to cast downe carnall and  
proud reasonings, which give  
the lye to the way of Gods  
free and full Grace ; which  
would have thee to be first, and  
of thy selfe, that which thou  
G canst



canst never be without Christ: and to doe and bring that which God never imposed on thee to doe or to bring, but hath told thee plainly, the working of it in thee belongs onely to himselfe, and hee is also really and graciously willing to bestow upon thee.

3. As for the third demand, What way thou mayst take for the mortifying of all this sin; I answer,

1. Generally, touching all of it, Do but insist in the ways on which already thou art false; Did any vertue in the death of Christ, (laid hold on by faith) did that heretofore help against sinne? It will doe so still: Did any love of God help thee the more to hate sin? It will doe so still: Did any assurance of a reconciled God in Christ, freely and abundantly pardoning of thee, weaken sin in thee? It will doe so still.

still: Did solemne confessions of sin, selfe-judgings, speciall mournings, sufficiently help thee with conquest of sinnes? They will doe so still: Did the humble application of thy self to the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, (through which he is pleased to reveale his arme) confer any strength against thy sins? It will help still: Did any holy feare, any tenderesse in conscience, any declining of occasions? Did vehement wrestlings with God in Prayer? Did serious meditation and consideration? Did close society with the Saints? Did studies of farther holinesse? Did frequent reviewings of thy condition, and renewings of Covenant with thy God in his strength? Did holy watchings? Did resistings of the first births of sin? Did these, any of these, all of these, or any other spiri-  
tall course besides these, cause



thy sinfulness to be vile unto thee, to be abhorred by thee, to be cast downe in thy judgement, to be cast out in thy affections, to be cast off in thy life? Goe on with these, and sinne will then be more and more mortified, and doubts will be more and more weakened: the more that thy conscience is thus sprinkled from dead works, the more shalt thou be able to draw neere unto God in assurance of faith.

2. Particularly, for the mortifying of remaining Infidelity, doe three things:

1. Study exactly the Covenant of Grace, in the Author of it, foundation of it, matters contained in it, and all the adjuncts and termes of graciousnesse, suitablenesse, fulnesse, faithfulness, &c. appertaining to it.

2. Study J E S U S C H R I S T  
thoroughly,

thoroughly; know him distinctly in the person of a Mediator, and offices, and effects, and works.

Then 3. To much meditation in these, abound in Prayer, that God in particular would cause thee by faith to set thy seale unto them: But more of this will follow in answering some other causes of doubtings.

2. The second spring was weaknesse and imperfection in faith: The cure and remedy of which, is, to perfect and strengthen faith: put more strength, more growth, more ripenesse into faith, and your doubtings will be lesse. The more purely the fire burnes, the lesse smoke it hath; and when the light and heat of the Sunne are greatest, then the clouds and misty vapours are fewest.

*Simile.*

Faith and Doubtings are  
G 3 like



Mar. 9. 24.

like a paire of scales, where the waight of the one beares away the other. The Disciples I remember prayed, *Lord, increase our faith*; and so did he of whom you heard in *Mark 9. Lord, help my unbelieve*.

*Ob.*

You will say, No man can deny, that if his faith had more strength, then his heart should have lesse doubting; But how may that be done? How may faith be strengthened?

*Sol.*

I answer,

1. God who gave faith, can strengthen it; for every grace depends upon him, not onely for birth, but also for complement: his strength must lead us on frō strength to strength, from faith to faith; he who is the Author, is also the finisher of it: And therefore if thou wouldst have a strong faith, thou shouldst goe to a strong God, and beg of him, *Lord, increase*

*crease my faith*; My knowledge is dim, lighten that candle, open mine eyes yet more, that I may see thy truths; My assents many times shaking, but do thou establish and confirm my heart in thy truths; My embracings, applications, very trembling, and broken, and interrupted, but doe thou guide mine eye to look upon my Saviour, do thou guide my hand to lay hold on him, doe thou enable my will and affections to embrace all the goodnesse of thy selfe, of thy Christ, of thy Word.

Doe thou  
perswade  
me, and I  
shall be  
perswaded

It is Gods method to lay in (at the first) weak faith, that we might beg for more faith, and give him the honour of all. Had we it strong at first, he should not heare of us; but he dispenseth it by degrees, that in all our gettings, and in all our victories over doubtings, &c. his strength may have



have the glory. Therefore goe to God, and say, Lord, I would have more faith, thou wouldst have me to perfect it, but all perfection is in thee, and I cannot by my meere strength ripen what thou givest, but thou canst water what thou plantest; though it be sowne a weak body, yet thou canst make it rise a strong body; though faith at first be but as a graine of mustard-seed, yet thou canst cause it to blossome, and to spread it selfe into a high measure: Therefore thou who alone canst doe it, doe it for thy weak servant: Thou must take charge of thine own graces; and if thou givest my faith more strength, my beleeving will bring thee in the more glory, &c.

2. The studying of Christ and the Promises more, will bring more strength and perfection to faith. It is with the  
Chri-

Christian as it is with the Scholar, let the Scholar study more the objects of knowledge, and then his knowledge will grow to be more large; So let the Christian study more the matters of faith, and his faith will rise to be more full.

*Simile.*

Hence the Apostle prays that the Ephesians, *Chap. 3. 19. might know the love of Christ, that they might be filled with all the fulnesse of God: And ver. 17. That Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, that so they might be able, ver. 18. to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.*

*Eph. 3. 19.*

*17.*

*18.*

What the Prophet spake of perishing, we may say of fainting and doubting, *My people doubt for want of knowledge.* Did we know the nature of our Redeemer more, how holy, and compassionate, and help-  
full it is; did we know the of-

*Hos. 4. 6.*



Psal. 9. 10.

Note.

offices of our Saviour, how absolute they are in removing our guilt, in conquering our corruptions, in making way for us to the Father, in speeding our suits and requests; did wee know how fully hee stands for us, he died for us, he intercedes for us, how willing he is yet to be more applyed by us, and possessed of us, we would beleeve more, & doubt lesse. What the Psalmist speaks of God, that same is true of Christ, *They that know thy Name will put their trust in thee.*

Yet take a Caution in thy studying of Christ, study him as God reveales him, otherwise thy doubts will stick upon thee. If a man studyeth his sins in his own way, in a naturall way, he shall neither rightly see them, nor yet be freed from them: So if men study Christ their owne way, if they will

will have him to be such a one as their fearfull hearts would make him to be, and not such a Saviour as God hath manifested him to be, then not conceiving of Christ as he is, they shall be and remaine still as they were.

3. Be in the wayes of strength. There are wayes in which God doth reveale his arme; his arme is that which doth strengthen us, and his arme is revealed in his Ordinances: for God doth not call us, nor change us, nor strengthen us, nor save us without meanes.

He who is too good for the Ordinances, will ever be too weak in his faith. A childe which cannot stand when it is borne, may yet goe by the use of the breasts; but that person who is weake, and wants strength, if he feeds not, will abate more, and ere long want life

A mighty  
Saviour &  
gracious.

Note.



Spirituell  
life like  
the natu-  
rall.

life it selfe. This is a truth, A new Christian is sometimes full, and a full Christian is alwayes weak : for our spirituall life is like unto our naturall life, both of which are within us, yet neither of them do rise, but from something without us.

Joh. 5. 11.

What the impotent person spake, *Joh. 5. 11. He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk*, that we affirme of Gods Ordinances, Those his meanes which made us good, can make us better; They made us live, and they can make us walk; They gave faith, they brought the hand which did set the plant, and they can enlarge faith, they bring the showres which doe water that plant:

For . they evidence Christ more, and open and unfold the Promises (which are the stayes of our faith) more.

2. They

2. They enervate or weaken, and scatter the grounds of our feares and doubtings, and exceedingly suppress the reasonings and powers of unbelief.

3. They cleare the understanding, and so keep open the way for faith to God and Christ.

4. They doe instill a secret and drawing vertue, they doe excite, and quicken, and perswade. *Ergo.*

Fourthly, let faith know its priviledges, and then it will grow more strong: Faith would do more, if it did know all that it might doe: Assuredly we should have more confidence, did we know our royalties.

Beleevers are more to God then the most immediate servants are to a Prince; All the Subjects of a Prince have some priviledges, yet theirs are greatest

God can answer that in one Sermon, which hath troubled us more then one yeare.



greatest, who are in nearest service ; now none nearer to God then Beleevers: See 1 *Pet.* 2.9. *Ye are a chosen generation, a royall Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar people; Nay, 2 Cor. 6. 18. Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty:* and these have those priviledges which the servants have not. They who descended from the blood of *Abraham*, had more priviledges then others, and have not they greater who come from the blood of *Christ*? The Priests of the Law had singular exemptions, and Kings of all men are most highly priviledged ; doe you think Beleevers come short, who are not profane , nor civill, nor typicall Priests, but royall Priests? who are not Priests onely, nor Kings onely, but both Kings and Priests, a royall Priesthood? who are a holy nation, a peculiar people,

(i.)

(i.) a people of treasure, such by whom onely God gets something?

O, say many weak Beleevers, The Lord doth not respect nor love us.

*Ob.*

No? Doth not God love those, whom (out of his meere love) he hath chosen? Doth not God respect the descent & generation of Christ? those who come of his blood? They who come from Christ, and are borne of God, are surely beloved of God.

*Sol.*

But the world, all men discountenance us, and regard us not.

*Ob.*

Ye are Kings in Gods account, ye have the royall oyntment, even the Spirit of Grace; the royall garment, even the righteousness of Christ; the royall attendance, even the Angels of God ministering unto you. You have a Kingdome which consists in righteousness,

*Sol.*



nesse, and peace, and joy,  
*Rom. 14. 17.* Cannot this stir  
 up faith?

*Ob.*

We are oft times afraid to  
 come before God, we feare ac-  
 cesse.

*Sol.*

Are ye not Beleevers? And  
 are not Beleevers the Priests  
 of God? And are not Priests  
 priviledged by their calling  
 to come before God? *The*  
*Priests might enter in, when none*  
*else might.* And is not Jesus  
 Christ the Altar upon which  
 we tender all our sacrifices and  
 services to God? and is it not  
 the Altar that sanctifies the  
 gift? *Mat. 23. 19.* The Apo-  
 stle saith, *Gal. 5. 1.* that *Christ*  
*hath gotten us a liberty:* and *Eph.*  
*2. 13.* that *we are made nigh by*  
*the blood of Christ:* and *Heb.*  
*10. 19.* that *we may have bold-*  
*nesse to enter into the holiest by the*  
*blood of Jesus.*

*Mat. 23. 19*

*Gal 5. 1.*

*Eph. 2. 13.*

*Heb. 10. 19*

If therefore we did once  
 throughly know what privi-  
 ledges

ledges the first-borne have, the sons of God have, the generation of Christ have, the Priests of God have, the purchased by Christ have; if we knew the grants of favour, and free accesses, and singular acceptances with God, in and through Christ, O how might we keep down our fears and our doubtings, and singularly encourage our faith to run, and with fullest eagerneſſe to embrace our God, our Christ, our Promises?

There be other meanes for the perfecting of faith, as, Experiences, Observation, &c. which I have touched long ſince, and our Divines are plentifull this way, and therefore I ſpare.

3. The third ſpring of doubtings, was, the ſtudy of the life of ſenſe: The remedy of which, is, the keeping of it downe: If you will keep off doub-

That

1. Gods

1. Love is ready.

2. Eare open.

2. Acceſſe made.

3. Speciall Interciſſions.

4. Imperfections nothing.

5. Grants certaine.



Joh 20.29

doubtings, you must keepe down sense and feeling. *Blessed* (saith Christ to *Thomas*, *Joh. 20. 29.*) *are they that have not seene, and yet have beleaved.*

If a man thinks this, That Christ is not mine, unlesse I handle him; and God is not mine, unlesse I see him; and grace is not mine, unlesse I feele it; he will be for ever full of doubts and feares.

For the helping of which, consider these things.

1. Sense is not a fit Judge of our condition; it cannot report our estate but by what it feeles: but the spirituall estate is not alwayes under feeling; wee should be good and bad, found and lost, cheerfull and sorrowfull, many times in one day, nay in one houre, if that sense gave sentence on our condition.

Beloved, think well on this,  
How can sense reach unto the  
times

times of desertion? unto the times of want? unto the times of indisposition? unto the times where faith doth expresse no acts, but such as are pure and cleare, and onely grounded upon the Promises? In these abstracted times, Sense finds nothing to speak to us, to evidence for us, for God holds off, and wants hold up, and dulnesses hold in, and we have nothing but a word of promise (all other things seeme to faile and forsake) to sustaine and retaine us.

2. The spirituall course many times goes against our sense, and therefore sense must be kept downe. You know that *Abraham* against hope beleevd in hope, *Rom. 4. 18.* Faith and sense are many times at a contradiction; faith will beleeve what sense perceiveth not; and what our sense doth perceive, that same  
our

There is not a latitude in sense.

As a rich mans had cannot holdall his lands, so a Christians sense cannot comprehend all his condition.

*Rom. 4. 18*



*For your  
wayes are  
not my  
waies, &c.*

*As the hea-  
uens, &c.*

*Esay 55.*

*My times  
are in thy  
hands.*

*Psal. 31. 15*

*Heb. 11. 1.*

*The evi-  
dence of  
things not  
scene.*

*2 Chron.*

*20. 12.*

*We know  
not what  
to doe, but  
our eyes  
are upon  
thee.*

our faith will not beleeve, but the contrary. *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*, faith *Job*: And *Abraham* beleeved his sons safety, in the sacrificing of him; and we our immortality, notwithstanding our death and corruption. This is very certaine, that when we feele corruptions living, faith will beleeve them to be dying; and when we feele our selves in trouble, faith will then beleeve our comforts and deliverances: Faith usually (I doe not say alwayes) beleeves the contraries unto sense.

For sense goes our way, and faith goes Gods way: Sense allowes and sets it selfe a time; and Faith is content to receive and take Gods times: Sense moves upon what appears, and Faith upon what is not yet: Sense looks downward, and Faith looks upward: Sense doth sustaine it selfe by some-  
thing

thing within us, and Faith sustaines it selfe by something without us: *Psal. 27. 3. So Hab. 3. 17, 18. So Esay 8. 17. I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will looke for him. Esay 50. 10. Who is he that walketh in darknesse and hath no light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.*

3. Sense or feeling is not *medium credendi*, but *fructus fidei*: (i.) It is not the ground of beleeving, but a fruit of faith. v. g. Take feeling in the most excellent parts of it, as in assurance, and joy, and peace, these are not Antecedents to faith, but Consequents of it. What is that? That is, a man hath not these first, and then faith for or from these, but he hath faith first, and these afterward.

Why dost thou not beleeve?

If

*Quest.*



Eph. 1. 13.  
*After ye  
 beleeved, ye  
 were sealed*

1 Pet. 1. 8.  
*In whom  
 though now  
 ye see him  
 not, yet be-  
 lieving ye  
 rejoyce  
 with joy  
 unspeak-  
 able, &c.*

If I had assurance that God were my God, and Christ were my Christ, and the Promises were mine, I would: But say, Is the Word or thy Assurance the ground of faith? And wouldst thou have the fruit before the tree? or thy safety before thou layest hand on the rock? If thou wouldst have assurance, thou must then beleeve; for the sweetnesse of assurance flowes from that faith which by beleeving feeds on Christ. So if thou wouldst have joy, beleeve; for true joy doth not prevent, but attend beleeving.

We are oft times troubled by our owne pride and folly; God sets us a way to beleeve, and we will follow our owne way; He gives unto us his Word of Promise to ground our beleeving, and wee will have our sense to be the ground: Of which course, I dare

dare say, what *Abraham* spake to the curiosity of *Dives*, who would have some to be sent from the dead, that his brethren might beleeve; to whom *Abraham* thus replyes, *If they heare not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded though one rose from the dead.*

*Luk. 16. 31.*

*Luk. 16. 31*

So say I, If men will not beleeve because God hath promised, neither will they beleeve if sense should stand up and speak; for we have more reason to suspect our owne testimony, then to distrust Gods invitation and promise.

You will reply, This testimony of sense in Assurance is Gods owne answer, and therefore if we had it, it would the more settle our faith.

*Ob.*

I answer,

1. Gods testimonies are indeed of a settling and quieting vertue, whether they be the  
evi-

*Sol.*



evidencing of our present interests in him, or speciall answerings of our present desires.

2. But then know, thou must first put to thy seale and hand of faith, before he delivers over to thee the assuring Evidences. And as yet I never knew any Christian who could be answered without faith, or took comfort in that which yet he did not beleeeve. For though it be the favour of God which doth properly comfort, neverthelesse it doth not actually comfort, unlesse faith hath taken in that favour.

*Ob.*

But are not former experiences (which are nothing else but sensible feelings) grounds to future beliefe? Did not *David* remember the dayes of old?

*Sol.*

I answer, True, Experiences are good encouragements to  
the

the future acts of faith, but the Word of God is still the ground of faith : They are not intrinsecall grounds, but extrinsecall motives.

You may consider the experiences, either in things granted and performed, or in the manner of their performance. Thou hast had Gods favour, thou hast had an answer, but how did thou obtaine them? was it not by beleeving? was it not by waiting upon some good word of Promise? Thy injoying of them did not prevent thy beleeving of the word of Promise, but the beleeving of that word of Promise did let in and bring unto thy soul that sweet and gracious experience : And therefore thy experience was not the ground heretofore, nor is it now ; onely thus farre it serves as a singular furtherance to faith, that that God on  
H whom

Note.



whom heretofore thou didst beleeve, and from whom (in beleeving) thou receivedst such gracious helps and answers, will againe (he being the same for ever, and his Promises being *Yea* and *Amen*) by further beleeving on his Word, renew his gracious goodnesse and merciful favour unto thy soule.

4. A fourth spring was, the restraining of faith, the curbing of it in its work, and in occasions. Now the remedy of this is, to give way unto faith; give it scope, let it doe its whole service: As the Apostle said of patience, *Jam. 1. 4. Let patience have her perfect worke*, so let faith; doe not restraine it, and then you shall be stay-ed, you shall be freed: The workings of one contrary re-straine the other.

Therefore Christ checks his Disciples for their anxieties,  
for

*Jam. 1. 4.*

for their carkings and sollicitudes, and would have them to let their faith loose to see a Father who would provide, *Mat. 6.32.* They had poverty, or feared it; their wants came in, and losses, and so their fears came in, and thoughts. But how should they cast them out? Thus: If faith did beleeve helps, as well as impatience find wants; if they would give way to faith to beleeve Gods providing, as well as sense to see the world abridging and ebbing, they would not have beene so full of thoughts: *Shall he not much more clothe you of little faith? ver.30.*

But for the farther help in this point, consider,

1. In any occurrence, Faith may be our Agent, it can deale for us, because, 1. Our temporall life is by faith, 2. The temporall Promises which reach

*Mat. 6.32.*

Three things here.



Hab. 2. 5.

over all the externall condition, are the bottome of faith: Hence it is said, *Hab. 2. 5. The just shall live by his faith.* When we have no other help, yet faith can be our staffe; when we have no other feeding, yet faith can be our bread: It can negotiate for the soule, it can make repayre to God, and singularly solace and sustaine the soule in his word of Promise.

Heb. 13. 5.

Suppose a mans means begin to shrink, his condition is drawing thin, he is neare to want, at such a time this man may keep downe his doubts, and tearing thoughts, if he will give faith a scope to worke: *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Heb. 13. 5.* Here is a Promise now, and here is plenty enough to faith; and faith (if it may have its perfect work) will sustaine thee against all doubtings.

I shall be left, sayest thou.

Thou shalt not, faith Faith.

Not now, perhaps, for yet I have something.

Nay, never, faith faith, for thou hast a continuall God, and he hath promised a continuall help. Thou wouldst be a free man, if faith were free, for faith will not leave God, and God will not faile faith; and why shouldst thou faile, when faith holds up thy heart, and God holds up thy faith?

So for any crosse and trouble; Not any burden this way, but faith may be a shoulder to easeus: As long as there is a Promise to beare up faith, faith will have strength to beare off the disquietments of our troubles.

I know not what to do, faith the person.

No? faith Faith, Is not the Lord good, *a strong hold in the day of trouble*, and doth not he

*H 3 know*

*Ob.*

*Sol.*

*Ob.*

*Sol.*

*Psal. 9. 10.  
They, &c.  
for thou  
Lord hast  
not forsake  
them that  
seek thee.*

*Ob.*

*Sol.*



Nah. 1. 7.

*Ob.*Gods arm  
is not  
shortned.*Sol.*

Job 5. 17.

know them that trust in him?  
*Nahum 1. 7.*

But troubles are renewed,  
and come againe ; and though  
I was delivered heretofore,  
yet now I feare.

Feare ? faith faith, No rea-  
son for that. See a notable  
place, *Job 5. 17. Happy is the  
man whom God correcteth.* If a  
man hath wounds , it is wel  
for him to have a searching  
plaister : and if a man hath a  
full stomach, it is well for him  
if he hath a potion ; and if his  
spirits putrifie, it is well for  
him to be let blood : So, &c.

18.

18 *For he maketh sore, and  
bindeth up ; he woundeth, and his  
hands make whole.*

19.

19 *He shall deliver thee in  
sixe troubles, yea in seaven there  
shall no evill touch thee.*

There is nothing new to  
God, nor difficult. Though our  
troubles be grievous to us, yet  
their deliverance is easie to  
God ;

God, and faith can find a harbour for every storme: yea, give faith but its scope, it will conclude present helps from former deliverances; and the escape out of old troubles, shall ensure faith in the new: *He who hath delivered, doth, and will still deliver, 2 Cor. 1.*

2 Cor. 1.

God doth not alter, neither in his truth, nor in his goodness, nor in his power, although our conditions doe vary: The temptation may be new, and affliction new, but God is still the same, and the Promises the same, and faith can make use of one God to conquer twenty temptations, and one Promise to beare up against many afflictions.

2. In every occurrence there is a providence, and the issues depend upon it. If Satan tempts, if afflictions, and crosses, and losses, and contempts befall us, there is a Providence



to permit them, to order them, to direct them, to restrainethem; and if we gave faith a scope to work upon that Providence, we would not be so full of doubts.

But his actions and the issues of them are subordinate and under restraint.

1. For Satan, he doth indeed tempt and suggest, but he cannot doe this when he pleaseth, he must ask leave of God to touch *Job* any way: And when he doth tempt, the issue doth not depend upon his malice; The Lord lookes on, and subministers marvellous strength, and makes his servants to pray earnestly, and heare earnestly, and apply his Promises, and will deliver.

Note.

We look upon Satan, and not upon God; we look upon strong temptations, but wee look not upon mighty assistances; we consider our owne weaknesse, but doe not consider Gods omnipotencie; wee think how unable we are, but not

not how able God is ; we find yet no deliverance, and doe not give faith its perfect worke, to beleeve that God will find a way to conquer for us. If faith did but dwell up- on Gods providence in this, how he suffers Satan to buffet us, and how his grace is suffici- ent for us , and how his power will be made manifest in weaknesse ; how he hath deli- vered, and doth in our very resistance deliver us, and hath promised to bruise Satan un- der our feet , wee would not doubt, we would not gratifie Satan with feares of fainting, but resist him stedfastly by en- couraging our selves in our God.

*In God is  
my trust, I  
will not  
feare what  
man can do  
unto me,  
said David.  
So here,  
&c.*

2. For our crosses and losses;  
There is a Providence in them,  
God is in all our troubles and  
wants : His wisdom is there,  
and his goodnesse : O how  
shall I be delivered ? How ?

*He is in  
Egypt, &  
in the fie-  
ry furnace,  
and in the  
prisons, &c*



Let faith work, and that will tell thee how. Why should I thus be troubled? Why? Let faith work; and that will tell thee: It is in *very faithfulness*, faith *David*: And *It is good for me that I am afflicted*. No child of God thus! Nay, let faith work, and it will cleare all; That a good condition is not exempted from afflictions, and that though God had one Son without sin, yet he had no Son without sorrow.

3. Our encouragements are more then our discouragements, and our helps exceed our oppositions; therefore faith is not to be restrained.

2 Kin. 6. 15  
Elisha's  
servant.

Christ to  
his Disci-  
ples.

The Prophet healed up his servants doubtings, 2 King. 6. 16. *Feare not, for they that bee with us are more then they that be with them.*

And so Christ to his perplexed and doubting Disciples about

about those exigencies and casualties to which they were exposed, *Feare not little flocke, it is your Fathers pleasure to give you a Kingdome. q. d.* Be not so disquieted, so anxious for your lives, for your safeties. Though you be a flock, and a little flock, and the wolves are many, yet let the worst come to the worst, you shall have a Kingdome. Oppose that to this, and you need not doubt and feare.

So S. John, 1 Joh. 4. 4. *Ye are of God, (little children) and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world.*

Once more, S. Paul, Rom. 5. 20. *Where sinne abounded, grace did much more abound; And 21. As sinne reigned unto death, so grace reignes through righteousness unto eternall life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

So againe for outward troubles,

A Kingdome opposed to temporall safety.

1 Joh. 4. 4. Gods Spirit opposed to Satans & Antichrists.

Rom. 5. 20 Grace opposed to sin.



Esa. 41.14  
Help to  
trouble &  
weakness.

And 2Cor.  
1.5. As the  
sufferings  
of Christ  
abound in  
us, so our  
consolation  
also, &c.

2Cor. 4.17  
Our light  
afflictions,  
&c. work  
for us a far  
more ex-  
ceeding  
waight of  
glory.

My Father  
is greater  
then all,  
saith Christ

bles, *Esa. 41.14. Feare not thou worme Jacob, (q.d. Thou art a weak creature, contemptible creature, a worme yet thou art Jacob, and therefore fear not) for I will help thee, saith the Lord. Though Jacob be weak, yet the God of Jacob is strong.*

So for outward losses, 2 Chron. 25. 9. said *Amaziah* to the man of God, *But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the Army of Israel?* The man of God answered, *The Lord is able to give thee much more then this.*

From all which we see, that Faith hath the better grounds to rest on; there are more with faith then against it : for none can be against it, except the evill creatures ; and he who is for it, is the mighty Creator ; All his power, and his goodnesse, and his Christ, and his Spirit, and his Word of Truth is for it : He is greater then all ;  
so

so that faith may have singular matter to work upon in all occurrences.

It is on the better side, and on the greater side, on that side which will carry it, and beare downe the contrary.

Satan is against me.

But greater is he (is that Spirit of Christ) in me, then he that is in the world.

Sin is against me.

But greater is Christ who is for me, then sinne which is in me. Grace hath much more abounded.

Men in their power are against me.

But greater is that Almighty God, before whom the Nations are but as the drop of the bucket, and lighter then a dust in the ballance.

Troubles are upon me.

But my comforts are greater then my sorrows, and the glory which I expect, infinitely

*Ob.*  
*Sol.*

*Ob.*  
*Sol.*

*Ob.*

*Sol.*

*Ob.*  
*Sol.*



ly exceeds the trouble which I suffer.

*Ob.*

Wants are upon me.

*Sol.*

But my supplies are exceeding; I have a provident Father: And though I have not a large portion of earth, yet I have a sure Kingdome in heaven.

*Note.*

Beloved, if we would but often consider of this, that faith is still on the better, on the surer side, we would quit all our doubtings; we would not feare what man can doe unto us, what Satan can doe unto us; our owne infirmities would not disable us, nor afflictions; for still faith falls to the surest partie, and therefore give it scope. Faith pitcheth upon no weak causes, upon no weak helps, upon no weak stayes; it stayes upon the Name of the God of *Iacob*.

O how might faith out-face the greatest oppositions, and  
tram-

trample-under all our affronts, and losses, and doubts, if we did let it get out unto its encouragements, could we once come with faith to be perswaded indeed, that they who are for us are more then they who are against us !

Brethren, in our spirituall combats we have the better cause, and the better strength ; what help heaven can afford, we have. Therefore in all our distresses let us hearten our selves, and incourage our faith: Let us (as *Iehu* in another case) look up, and say, *Who is on my side, who?* and then wee may even say what the Psalmist spake, *Psal. 124. 1. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may (the Beleever) Israel say, 2. If it had not been the Lord, &c. 7. Our soule is escaped as a bird out of the snare, &c. 8. Our help is in the Name of the Lord, &c.*

*Psa. 124. 1*

2.

7.

8.



5. A fift spring of doubtings, was speciall and particular sins after conversion: These, like a strong disease, do shake the very heart and spirit of the Christian, and stagger him on every side ; and like a cloud, fold up all our comfortable communion with God ; like a dead fly they fall in all our services. *If thou dost ill, sinne lies at the doore*, said God to Cain: And so you shall find it, that speciall sinnes after conversion doe much interrupt us in our approaches, and in our confidences.

Now the way to cure this spring, is,

1. To renew our sorrowes, to set upon the fountaine: *David* did so after his great sins, and so did *Peter*; the one did *water his couch*, and *his teares were his meat day and night*, and the other *went out and wept bitterly*.

*David.*

*Peter.*

Bit-

Bitternesse of sorrow, (you read of it in *Zach.* 12. 10.) imports, 1. an anguish of spirit: As *David* said for his *Jonathan*, *My soule is distressed for thee*; so here the false Christian is distressed for sinning thus against his God, for losing his God; There is oft times a very tearing and renting in the soule.

2. A sensible fulnesse of griefe: As *Ioseph* was full of compassion, and his bowels could hold no longer upon the oration of *Judah*; so the false Christian is full of holy meltings, his heart is ready to break, and like a full vessell it must have vent.

Many a time he must, and doth consider this vile sin, and hies him alone to poure out his grieved heart before the Lord, and shames himselfe before him, and confesseth with confusion of face his treacherous

Bitternes,  
what it  
imports.  
1. Anguish

2 Fulnesse  
of griefe.



Three  
sorts of  
sorrows.

How to  
raise our  
sorrow.

rous and unworthy dealing  
against his God.

There is, you know, a naturall sorrow, as for the losse of children ; and a politicall sorrow, as was that for the good King *Josiah*, and there is a spirituall sorrow, which is for our sins : This must now be exceedingly renewed, and you may raise it by consideration of mercy. O Lord, what have I done ? Why have I done this ? Thou shewedst me mercy in opening my eyes, in changing my heart, in calling me to holinesse, in pardoning of former sins ; yet after all this, I have sinned against thee, I have wounded my heart, dishonoured thy Name, turned thy grace into wantonnesse, lost thy favour, broke my peace, injured my Christ, grieved thy Spirit, turned away thine eare, given advantage to Satan, and deserved for ever to  
fit

fit in darknesse, &c. Beloved, if you find your hearts unhum-  
bled, you shall finde your  
hearts still to be unbelee-  
ving.

For besides that great sins  
are great provocations to our  
gracious God; they are also  
(till we are humbled for them)  
great impediments to faith;  
faith cannot do service for us,  
it cannot uphold us, it cannot  
bring a comforting Promise  
unto our hearts, untill our  
hearts are humbled for our  
sins. God comforts none but  
mourners; and faith cannot  
fall in with him, untill our  
hearts fall out with our  
selves.

And here take heed you be  
not sleight and too quick: if  
you be, you shall have your  
doubtings againe. God doth  
seldome or never speak easie  
peace after a great sin. If you  
skin up a sore, it will break  
out

Note.



out againe : If your sorrows be not deep and found, your fears will be fresh and multiplyed : but let them be pious, and serious, and then the soule will after a while recover it selfe, and plead, and find mercy with God, and be able to answer and silence all the doubtful reasonings which will rise against faith in its wonted communions and applications.

*Ob.*

But you will say, If wee should sorrow thus, yet wee should still doubt of mercy and Gods favour.

*Sol.*

A great current will bear down the dam, and true sorrow will carry away our doubtings.

*Jer. 31. 18.*

I answer,

1. Thou hast now to answer thy doubtings. True, I did sin thus, but I have truly grieved for this sinne : and though I might not apply mercy because I sinned, yet now I may, because I am grieved.

2. See Gods disposition to *Ephraim, Jer. 31. 18. I have surely*

ly heard Ephraim bemoaning himselfe, &c. ver. 19. I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth. But then ver. 20. Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I doe earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.

Though God be offended with our sins, yet he is delighted in our sorrows; and nothing melts him more, then to see us come melting before him. The mournfull behaviour of Iosephs brethren moved him, and the returning Prodigals falling downe to his Father, and cryings out, went to the heart of him: And it is not without cause that David prayes, *Regard my teares that fall*; And, *Are not my tears registered*? And, *Put thou my teares*  
into

19.

20.

The father  
likes the  
sons sub-  
missions,  
though  
not his re-  
bellions.



*into thy bottle.* Melting teares doe melt a tender God and Father.

2. To renew our repentance ; in which I would comprehend both detestations and forsakings. These sins must be made very hatefull to the soul, you must imbitter them, you must purge out all the sweetnesse of them, all the liking of them ; Nay you must set upon them as on things most abominable. Hence that phrase of *loathing your abominations*, Ezek. 36.

Ezek. 36.

Rev. 2. 5.

S. Iohn, Rev. 2. 5. adviseth decayed *Ephesus* to remember from whence she was false, and to repent. Beloved, this is not a condition to stay in ; This water is deep, and drowning is possible, if we lie in it : But if wee rise out of our sinnes, then our doubtings will fall. It is with our consciences, as it is with water in a pot ; if you put no fire

*Simile.*

fire under it, it is quiet; but if you kindle a fire, the water will boyle and bubble, it hath no quiet: So though conscience be quiet and kind, and molests us not, if yet fire come under, if any notable sin come in, and kindle in the heart; now the boylings, now the feares and doubts of the soule.

And in these rumblings, the way to cease them, is to remove the fire, and then you shall see how the water grows to a stilnesse again, and by degrees leaves fuming: So will our soules come to a pacified temper, to a settlednesse, if once our sins be removed; leave the sins, and ordinarily the doubts will leave the sinner.

For as sinne is our unquiet sea, so Repentance is our secure harbour: Any knowne sinne unrepented, still puts in, and inlivens doubts in us; but Repentance

The sea will be calme, if the winds cease.

Esay 1. 16,  
17. Cease to doe evilly,  
learne to doe well.  
18. Come now and let us reason together, &c.



\* *Loc.cit.*

penitance plucks out the venome, and the rage. An amended child comes againe before his Father, and a reformed Christian and penitent, may  
\* yet be confident.

3. Sue out a speciall assurance: You may see by *Dauids* disposition, after his speciall sins, that a generall acquittance would not serve the turne; for speciall sins you must sue out speciall assurance of pardon.

Your consciences will never be quiet else; Nay this will not satisfie thee, that yet they are pardonable, that they are such as doe not exclude thee out of the Proclamation; thou wilt never be quiet untill God speaks peace, untill he doth put his seale to acquit thee of particular sins.

Sin will rise, it will lie up-  
permost, thou shalt feele it so,  
it will fly in thy face, it will  
come up in serious times, untill  
thou

thou repent of it, and sue out thy discharge; therefore be earnest with the Lord for pardon of it, for a speciall acquittance: If the Lord Jesus did seale his blood upon thy heart, thy doubtings would cease.

But you will say, There is now no hope: though wee should grieve, though we should repent, though wee should sue for pardoning mercy, there is now no hope; for these are sins after conversion, and they are great ones too; and besides we find no particular promise to ease our souls upon.

Let me answer this doubt fully, for it is a folded one; there are many in it: Consider therefore,

1. The promise of pardon is indefinite to repentance: and

Three things.  
The par-

doning promise is exclusive, in respect of sinners; but inclusive in respect of penitents: not all sinners, but all repenting sinners shall be pardoned.



I beseech you mark this point: God doth not say, I will pardon sins simply, but if men repent and forsake sins, they shall have mercy. So againe, in promising pardon to Repentance, he doth not promise it respectively, and conditionally, but absolutely and fully.

What is that? That is, God doth not say, If you repent of such or such sinnes, then you shall have pardon; but hee saith simply and absolutely, If you repent: So that let the sins be never so great, never so many, yet if they be sinnes of which thou now truely repentest, they are assuredly pardoned. *Esa. 55.7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him returne unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Here you see a promise of abundant pardon to be made unto

Esa. 55.7.

unto the penitent ; though he hath had thoughts, though he hath had wayes, yet if he forsakes them, the Lord will pardon and shew mercy.

Againe, because that pardon is promised to actuall repentance indefinitely, therefore let the sinner be what he will, let him be a person who was not converted before, or let him be a person already converted, yet if he begins true repentance, or the other renews his true repentance, they shall be pardoned : And the reason is, because it is not sinne simply in such an estate which God pardons, but it is sinne repented of, which God doth promise to pardon : And therefore if an evill man, whose life hath been a course of sins, repents and leaves his sins, he shall have mercy : Or if a good man fall accidentally into sin, upon his repentance



Pro. 28. 14

Eze. 18. 32

ver. 21, 22.

he may confidently plead out Gods promises of pardon, for he shall have mercy upon his repentance, as you may see *Prov. 28. 14. He that forsakes his sinnes, shall find mercy. Ezek. 18. 32. Turne your selves, and live. See ver. 21, 22. If the wicked will turne from all his sinnes, they shall not be mentioned unto him.*

*Simile.*

Whence we may infer, that if God will forgive his enemies, he will then (upon the same repentance) forgive his children. If a King will pardon a returning Traitor, wil he not receive then a returning son? It was a pious speech of S. Chrysostome, *Si Deus promittat gratiam nobis offendentibus, quid faciet nobis pœnitentibus?* If he promiseth grace unto us when we are sinning, what then will he confer on us, if we be repenting?

2. Christ is of great vertue  
still,

still, and as able to put away the sins after conversion, as well as before : therefore is he called *the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever* : And the Apostle reasons it in the *Romans*, *If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life ?*

Heb. 13. 8.

Rom. 5. 10

We must think of the pacification by Christ, of the atonement, of the propitiation, of the satisfaction, not as confined to any one sinne, or to any one estate, but in respect of its sufficiency, reaching over both estates, and all the sins in both. What is that ? That is, the death of the Lord J E S U S was not onely to reach the sins thou didst commit in thy unconverted estate ; and the rest afterward in thy converted estate, thou art to satisfie for by thine owne power some  
I 3                      other



other way. What is this but that Popish leaven? that self-justification? those humane satisfactions? What is this but to divide our salvation twixt Christ and our selves? What is this but to restraine either the sufficiencie or the efficacie of his death?

No, Christ is unto us in respect of sins before, and sins after conversion, as the Lord was to the Israelites, a pillar of a cloud, and a pillar of fire. Jesus Christ is a cloud in the day, (in the time of conversion) to cover our sins upon our repentance; and a pillar of fire by night, (for the times of former darknesse) upon our repentance to consume away our sins, &c.

The difference of our estates doth no way adde or diminish to the strength and efficacie of his death: His blood can cry as loud now as heretofore, and  
is

Christ a  
pillar of  
cloud, and  
a pillar of  
fire.

is not lesse effectuall to get pardon for our falls in the way, then for our sinnings when we were not in the way, as is evident in the sins of *Paul* before his conversion, and in sins of *David* and *Peter* after their conversion: for Christ is our continuall Mediator, and ever-living Intercessor.

But you will reply, These sins cut off all our interest in Christ, and all relations, and therefore no hope now.

I answer, though the comfortable interest be cut off, (untill the time of sound repentance) yet the radicall interest is not: As the leprous person was debarred the use of his house, (untill he was cleansed) yet he was not debarred the title and right of his house: and therefore thou mayest (upon thy repentance) sue unto the Lord by the blood of thy Saviour, the

*Ob.*

*Sol.*

No sinne that thou canst grieve for, cuts off our communion & interest.



pardon of these finnes.

Pfal. 136.

Pfal. 86. 5.

13.

15.

Mica. 7. 18

19.

3. The Lord is mercifull still unto repentants : You shall read in *Pfal. 136.* that his mercy is set downe 26. times with the adjunct of everlastingnesse, *His mercy endureth for ever.* And *Pfal. 86. 5.* Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy, unto all them that call upon thee. So *ver. 13.* Great is thy mercy towards me. And *ver. 15.* Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. So *Micah 7. 18.* Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquitie, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage ? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. *19.* He will turne againe, he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Mercy

Mercy is not strange unto God, it is his nature, it is his delight, and repentance will not be hid from his eyes, if it be not hid from our hearts : He calls us to repent, and causeth us to repent, that he might shew us his mercy, and everlastingnesse of his mercy.

6. A sixt spring of doubtings was indisposition unto or about spirituall duties : Whence we feare the truth of grace, which is active and lively, and doubt our acceptance with God, by reason of our dulnesse and deadnesse.

For the curing of this, consider,

1. That dulnesse in holy duties is possibly incident to men truly sanctified. Beloved, there is a great difference betwixt a dead heart, and a dull heart : That heart is properly termed dead, which wants a living spring, and therefore

A dead heart.



The difference  
twixt a  
dead heart  
and a dull  
heart.

A dull  
heart.

Rom 7.  
21, 22.

spirituall duty is contrary unto it, it hath a secret averfnesse to holy services, it cares not for holy prayer; there is not onely an indifferency whether the work be done, but a determinate dislike, and positive unwillingnesse, or rather (a Nolition) a nillingnesse to the same. Whence ariseth that shuffling carriage in wicked men, to find diverting occasions, and arguing reasonings against the strictnesse and spiritualnesse of duty.

But againe, that heart is properly termed dull, which hath in it a living spring, but hath not a lively operation: *The Spirit is willing,* (said Christ) there the spring was open; *but the flesh is weake,* there the operation was narrow. The Christian may say with *David, My heart (O Lord) is ready, my heart is prepared;* and as *Paul, I would doe good,*  
and

and I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but yet, saith he, I find a law, that when I would doe good, evill is present with me; And I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. So in the Galatians, The flesh lusteth against the spirit, &c. and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot doe the things that yee would. Ye would doe, but yee cannot do; Ye cannot alwayes do the work ye would do, and ye cannot do it in such a manner as ye would doe it.

Gal. 5. 17.

You know that a full vessell which hath a narrow neck, it cannot send out the waters so speedily, nor so fully; and a sick man, who would fetch more then a turne about his chamber, he cannot doe that, sometimes; if he doth it, it is with extream wearisomnesse, not of his mind, but of his body. Or as a lusty and able man escaped.

Simile.



escaped out of prison with a great chaine about his leg, he would run away, but the chain hinders him, and vexeth him, so that it doth indispose him in the motion.

In like manner is it many times with good people; The heart, the will is bent, it is resolved for Prayer, for hearing, &c. but then there is a chaine clogs them, there is a spirituall weaknesse, there is flesh in them as well as spirit, and this doth dull them, this doth indispose them about the doing, about the exercise of their intentions and desires.

Therefore let us take heed of denying or concluding the absence of grace, from the infirmity of working. *David* prayed often to be quickned, and so may we, and yet bee

*Psal. 119.*

*25. My soule cleaveth to the*

*dust, (that was low enough) quicken thou me, &c.*

*28. My soule melteth for heavinesse, strengthen thou me according to thy word.*

*alive.*

alive. It is one thing to have life, another thing to have livelihood: That may be present, when this is absent: for a Christian, 1. may have a dull temper of body, not able to render unto him the spirituall sense of spirituall duties, melancholy doth intercept the vitality not onely of nature but of grace.

2. He may not so seriously meditate and dwell upon the wayes and motives of livelihood, hee may have but remisse, and unpiercing, or unapplying thoughts of Gods great love and mercy, of Christs blood and intercession, of the Promises's goodness and fulnesse; and therefore his spirit may be dull.

3. He may not have such an actuall aid and speciall influence from the Spirit of Christ to excite his spirituall frame and temper; and then

Life and livelihood are different.

The oyle may not be on the wheel, nor that gale to the ship.

if



if that wind be more slack, our ship will move on with lesse forwardnesse.

Or lastly, perhaps he may have over-lasht, he hath been (improvidently or accidentally) in the dulling wayes; hee hath been surfetting upon some sin, or too greedily embracing the heavy world, or been idle in his particular calling. But,

Indisposition is not  
fundamental.

Note.

Whatsoever the cause may be, this is certaine, that Indisposition is not fundamental; it is not such a case, which nullifies the estate of Grace: For as in our most lively times there is more duty then wee can throughly doe; so in our dullest times there is not more duty then we would doe.

And this know, that the Christian condition keeps up for truth of being, notwithstanding the many pauses, the many eclipses, the many indispo-

dispositions which may, and doe accompany it.

But yet againe, secondly, be informed of this, that God observes the bent of the heart in the duty, and accordingly accepts of it. You know that place in the Chronicles, how that the good Lord did pardon every one who prepared his heart to seek him, though he were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.

The greatest actions managed from a corrupt heart are not accepted with God: (All the superfluous and abundant gifts of the Pharisees were worthlesse, yet the Widowes mite found acceptance) The meanest duties set forth with a perfect heart are acknowledged by God; he will take notice of them; for God looks to the heart: He eyes not so much thy behaviour, he listens not so

2 Chro. 30.  
18, 19.

Gods eye  
is more on  
the intent  
of the  
workman,  
thē on the  
extent of  
the work.

Note.



so much to thy words, but (through these) he considers thy heart; if that come with life, though thy body come with dulnesse, though thy tongue be not so fluent, yet if there be life and truth in the heart, he will find duty and accept of it.

*Simile.*

You remember that *Simile* of the Goldsmith, who hath a skilfull eye to find out the smaller and neglected wayes of gold, though covered with much drosse; and many times there is much fire and much gold, when both are hidden with dust and cole: So is it with the Lord, he can sent out the secrets of our desires, and what we would doe is observed and taken with him for well done, notwithstanding the many indispositions which cover our Altar.

Our  
groines are  
not hid  
from him.

1 Chron.  
28.9.

Therefore it is *Dauids* counsell to *Solomon* his son, *Know*  
*thou*

*thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: If thou seek him, he will be found of thee, &c.*

Beloved, we are mistaken about duty; we judge it not to be duty, unlesse the tongue can speak much, and our behaviours be fresh, &c. as if a man were not a man, and did no work in course cloathes: But know we, that the sealing of spirituall service with integrity of heart, is duty.

And that is it which God considers, and unto which he hath made many promises of acceptance, and audience, and grant.

This is something to stay us, will you say: But now wee stick at this, Whether the bent of our hearts bee intire, notwithstanding our indispo-

God can find duty in speechlesse tears, and sighs, & groanes.  
Rom. 8.

*Ob.*



*Sol.*

dispositions and dulnesses?

That may easily be discerned: You may know that the bent of the heart is right and eaven in duties,

How to know that the bent of the heart is right.

1. By not contenting your selves with this heavy kind of performing of duties: You will have life enough to dislike your selves, though you have not power enough to mend your services.

There are some men (and they have evill hearts) which will be picking some help and pleas for their lazy and dull serving of God, from what hath been spoken.

*Ob.*

O say they, though we cannot doe as others doe, yet our hearts are as good, and as willing; God knowes the heart, and regards it.

*Sol.*

He doth so, and he knowes this of thy heart, that it yeelds him lazy service, and dislikes not it selfe therein: But now the

the true Christian is not satisfied with this, that God accepts of a weak heart; but it would also hereupon bring him a better heart.

It doth many times fall out with it selfe, and rebuke its owne dulnesse, *Why art thou so heavy, O my soule? and why art thou so indisposed within me?* Thou art serving of a living God, why dost thou not serve him with a more lively heart? And then it breaks out on the sudden, Well, Lord, If I had a better heart, thou shouldst have it; If I could find more affections, I would bestow them on thee.

Hereupon,

2. It falls upon the wayes of livelihood, and exerciseth the art of quickning: It will not rest in this indisposition, but will use all the meanes to better it selfe; and this doth abundantly manifest its bent.

As



*Simile.*

As you know, the weak person he will have one turne more, and the ingenuous Scholar will write one line more, and the desirous Archer will make one shot more ; So the sincere heart, he will assay yet more in duty ; Perhaps frequencie in duty (saith he) may breed fervencie in duty. (A man may get him an heat by walking, and by rubbing his benumbed parts.) Or perhaps saith he, one duty more in another kind, may quicken me to duty in every kind ; as some physick and cordiall to the heart, may cause more nimblenesse in the hands and feet. I am somewhat dull in praying, I will therefore read more, or heare more, that I may find matter to set on my Prayer : I may perhaps meet with that in reading, which may set me on in praying. Or I am somewhat dull in hearing,

*Note.*

ring, I will therefore pray more, perhaps God may heare my prayer, and then I may heare his word with more attention, delight, profit, &c. And assuredly so it falls out many times, that our indispositions are more about some particular duties which are singularly removed by the small dispositions, yet left in us about some other duties.

Or if all this betters not, yet, saith he, I will even goe to Gods Ordinances, and will come before him, and bring him my soule thus indisposed, perhaps yet he may be disposed to quicken mee by his Word, to cheere me by his Sacrament; Who knows but that he may let fall a blessing? that he may so powerfully direct himselfe to me, as to shake my heart, as to throw off all my dull distempers, and revive my Graces, and excite



cite my affections? &c.

So that if you perceive your dulnesses, if they grieve and displease you, if you will not rest in them, if you yet set out to the meanes of removall, assuredly your hearts are sincere; God seeth that the bent is honest, that thou art indeed willing; and take this for thy comfort, that if it be thus with thee, God (for present) accepts of thy services, and ere long thou shalt be freed of these indispositions which doe accompany thee in thy services: God will drive this sleepe from thine eyes, and these fowles from thy sacrifice. Once again though, note, that

3. The cause of all acceptation is in Christ: therefore doe not doubt that God will reject thy services because of thy indispositions, but beleeve he will accept of thy  
fin-

sincere indeavours, because  
 in his Christ. Beloved, it  
 was ~~not~~ for us to consider  
 all things about duty. A sin-  
 cere heart must set it out, a gra-  
 cious God must take it, and  
 a mighty Redeemer and In-  
 tercessor must present it.  
 Christ presents that to his  
 Father, which we present to  
 Christ: The duty belongs to  
 us, but the reason of accepta-  
 tion is not in the Petitioner,  
 but in the Intercessour: God  
 accepts not for our fulnesse,  
 not for our liveliness, but  
 for his Sonnes worthinesse,  
 for his merits, who ever  
 lives to make intercession for  
 us, who offers up the prayers  
 of the Saints with the per-  
 fume and odours of his righ-  
 teousnesse.

Are thy prayers fervent?  
 They are not accepted for their  
 own strength: Are they weak?  
 They are not rejected for  
 their

## Note.

Rev. 8. 3.  
*The Angel  
 had a gol-  
 den censer,  
 and much  
 incense:  
 that he  
 should offer  
 it with the  
 prayers of  
 all Saints  
 upon the  
 golden Al-  
 tar.*



He appears  
for us.  
Heb. 9.

Note.

their impotencie. Is thy heart sincere? Then know that Christ hath sufficiency of merits to cover thy (self-blamed) indispositions, and to gain the acceptance of the weakest (if sincere) services.

Therefore this were a good way, in case of disliked indispositions, not to place the acceptance in our selves, but in Christ; And though there be inequality of expressions in duty, *quoad nos*, in us, yet there is a constancy of intercession by Christ, *propter nos*, for us. Sometimes we come more fully, sometimes more emptily; sometimes we run, and other times all that we can do is to move; sometimes affections are smart, judgements quick, expressions ready, requests fervent, hearings reverent and delightfull, at other times the whispences be-  
most downe. We have prayed a  
long

slowly, our affections turne not so lively, our judgements are barren, language sticks, Requests breath only, but flame not, we heare, and give credit, and stocke it up and that is all: Here you see the various carriages of our holy services in respect of the person, yet there is no such variety in Christ.

Whence it would follow, that if our duties found grace with God, because of their accidentall vivacity in our performance, all our weaker services were utterly lost, and in case of the more lively services, Christ also were lost; because the reason of their acceptation would be in themselves.

But Christ is required to make up our duties, as well as to make up our persons; hee may be a Mediator for these, servants intercessor for those: the talents <sup>in</sup> there is a constant



As our  
persons, so  
our prayers  
must stand  
before  
God by  
Christ.

stant merit, and a perpetuall offering of that same up, with all the prayers of all Saints; hence it is that they are accepted, not for their owne worth, but for his Name.

7. A seventh spring of doubtings, was, a conceit of succeslesnesse in duty: We have prayed much for the perfecting of such Graces, or the subduing of such corruptions, or establishing in such duties and courses, yet nothing comes of it, we are as we were, and where we were; therefore we doubt that we are not good, or that God doth not intend any good to us.

This is the spring, the cure and remedy of which may be made up by these considerations: *viz.*

1. Service and progresse in duty belongs to us, and rewards and recompences belong to God. I have prayed a long  
long

long time to God : True, and thou art bound to pray still. I have heard a long time: True, and thou art bound to heare still. Thou dost but what thou art bound to doe. It is the Husbandmans part to plow the land, and to sow the corne, and it is Gods part to give the harvest. Hereupon, saith the Apostle, *Let us not be weary in wel-doing, for in due season wee shall reap, if we faint not: For God is a God hearing Prayer, and he will be found of them that seeke him, and will not forsake them.*

2. God is a good Master: *Job* did not serve him for nought. *I called upon the Lord, and he answered me, said David.* And in another place, *He hath heard my voice and my supplications, and inclined his eare unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* Not one of the servants who traffiqued with the talents that could com-  
K 2                      plaine

*Simile.*

Gal. 6. 9.

Psal. 65. 2.

9. 10.

Psal. 118. 5

116. 1, 2.



Mal. 3. 13.

14.

17.

18.

plaine he was an austere Master. Therefore God takes it to heart, when they in *Malachie* charged him with neglect and irrecompence for serving of him; *Your words have beene stout against me, saith the Lord.*

How so? *Ye have said it is in vaine to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord?* Whereupon the Lord instantly manifesteth his bountifull and tender disposition to them who did serve him, and think on his Name, *They shall bee mine, (saith he) and when I make up my jewels, I will spare them as a man spareth his owne son that serveth him.* Then shall ye returne and discern betweene the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. (i.) Then you shall know that it is not lost labour to serve him.

3. Petitioners must wait an answer, as well as present a request: Therefore know that faith in point of seeking unto God hath a double office:

1. One is, to deliver up in the Name of Christ, our wants, which God hath promised to supply in his Word.

Faith hath  
a twofold  
office.

2. Another is, to expect and wait those supplies which God hath promised. Therefore saith David, *As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, untill (even so long, let it be never so long) untill that he have mercy upon us.*

Psal. 123. 2

And (beloved) this waiting doth notably distinguish betwixt desires which come from an unsettled humour, and those which come from poverty of spirit. In them, wee give on, but presently give up,

Waiting  
doth di-  
stinguish  
desires of  
unsettled  
humour.



*Simile.*Poverty of  
spirit.

as we doe in sleight visits with men, knock at doore, and if none answer, away we goe, our businesse was little, and so our stay is answerable: but in those desires which spring from poverty of spirit, these have faith to beleieve that God is at home, and have patience to wait his answer.

*Simile.*

As a poore begger, (suppose such a one as *Lazarus*) he will lie at the gate, and knock more then once, & wait more then an houre for some alms, for some crums of our tables; and so will humble Christians, who are truly poore in spirit, they will be at heaven gates, and put up request after request, and expect day after day the speeding of them from the throne of grace and mercy.

*Ob.*

But we cannot wait.

*Sol.*

You cannot! And that is  
the

the reason you misse of your answers. If beggers will not stay, they lose their alms; and if Christians will not wait, they lose their grants.

Yet let me not goe off easily from this scruple, for in it lies the choicest part of the cure: If we could but wait on God, then assuredly we should see that we have no reason to cry out of fruitlesnesse in seeking.

How may we doe to wait?  
Thus.

1. You are sure to speed. Certainty of answer will beget constancy in seeking. Sure to speed? How shall wee be sure of that? Thus.

1. Take it in Promises, and so you are sure.

2. Take it in performances, and so likewise you are sure.

For Promises, you know, there is a certainty in them;

K 4

we

*Ob.*

*Sol.*

Four motives to wait.

Promises.



*Simile.*

we have no way to pierce into Gods intentions of doing us good, but by his Promises; and in them we have: For as the words of man doe deliver unto us the thoughts of man; so the Promises of God doe discover unto us the intentions and purposes of God. Now then observe what God hath promised to waiting;

Hab. 2.3.

*Hab. 2.3. The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speake, and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Here is the duty, Wait; Here is the Promise, delivered, doubled, trebled, It shall speake, It will come, It will surely come: Nay doubled againe, It shall not lye, it will not tarry. It is as if God had said, Doe but wait, and you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered.*

O the rhetorike of God ! O the certainty of his Promises !

*Psal. 27. 14. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.*

*Psal. 27. 14.*

*Esay 40. 31. They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength: They shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walke and not faint.*

*Esa. 40. 31.*

*Micah 7. 7. I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will heare me.*

*Mica. 7. 7.*

Will you now see a certainty in performances? Then read *Psal. 40. 1. I waited patiently upon the Lord, and he enclined to me, and heard my cry.* Here was waiting, and here was sure speeding.

Performances.

*Psal. 40. 1.*

He was but one man.

*Ob.*

Then *Heb. 6. 12. Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the Promises.*

*Sol.*

*Heb. 6. 12.*



They did inherit the Promises, (i.) got all the good out of them by patient waiting. If we be sons, let us wait, and then we also shall be heires of the Promises: The good of them shall be settled upon us.

Esa. 49. 23

See also *Esay* 25. 9. and *Esay* 49. 23. *None shall be ashamed who wait on me.* From all which we infer, If God hath made sure Promises, If hee hath hitherto performed those Promises unto such as wait upon him, Then if we wait, we shall surely speed, &c.

*Simile.*

2. The things you desire are great; and worth the waiting. You would thinke him a strange man, who would not wait the sealing of the pardon which the King hath promised him. It is a wonderfull thing, that when God promiseth us pardon of sinnes, wee cannot have patience to seek and

and wait the sealing of it :  
Yet pardon of sinnes is such  
a thing, as our very life lies  
in it.

So againe, Is not grace a singular thing? Is not mortifying of sin an excellent thing? And is it much that the Lord puts us to more frequent seekings, to iterated prayers and duties, for those gifts and grants which are so high in their nature? so admirable in their use? so saving in their end? can you be better employed?

3. The answers will sweeten and easily recompence all the times and labours of seeking. When the man-child is borne, all the labour in travail is forgotten; the joy of it drownes the sense of that. Let God but lift up the light of his countenance on thee, it will answer and quit to all the prayers that ever thou madest  
in

As the  
Wisemen  
when they  
saw the  
star, rejoy-  
ced.



Cant. 3.4.  
And Da-  
vid doth  
forget the  
aking of  
his bones,  
&c. when  
God did  
answer  
him.

Prayers are  
our mo-  
ney at use.

in thy life. *I found him whom  
my soule loveth, I held him, &c.*

4. Doubled services have  
usually doubled mercies : for  
when God prepares the heart,  
he will incline the eare ; and  
when he intends a great mer-  
cy, he first enlargeth the heart  
to a greatnesse of desire and  
seeking. Every true seeking of  
God opens the heart wider,  
and secretly addes to the stock:  
The more prayers we have put  
up to use in the hands of God,  
the larger will the returne of  
them prove : When we have  
been long suiters, God doth  
(ordinarily) at length dismisse  
us with more then what wee  
aske ; So that he will answer  
us not onely for our prayers,  
but also for our time.

4. We shall have the best  
things in the fittest times :  
therefore we should not accuse  
our services as lost, for God  
will answer them ; but then it  
shall

shall be in the best things, at the best times.

O, will you say, Is it not more then time that I had more grace, and sin more subdued?

*Ob.*

I answer, Perhaps not : God doth know that thou hast a proud temper, and thou growest big, and art apt to swell upon enlargements : Thou art apt to despise others, and to make glorious conceits of thy selfe, and therefore he doth answer thee, not by victory, but by combat : That is, he doth not presently subdue thy sinne, that it shall not trouble thee, but lets it alone that it shall exercise thee, thou shalt find matter to keep thee low and humble, when still thou feelest such remnants and workings of corruption. To the resistance of which God doth yet enable, and after thy heart growes more emptied, thou shalt

*Sol.*



shalt have victory. Againe, though thou prayest against thy sins, yet thou dost venture upon the provocations and occasions of sinne, and therefore the Lord may justly hold up, because thou holdst not in. Now the Lord (by his silence) will teach thee in these times, forbearance on thy part, as well as forbearance on his part; and then upon thy next prayers accompanied with this watchfulnesse and avoidance of occasions, he will let fall more strength and power to mortifie thy sinfull dispositions.

Wherefore let us not faint in case of suspensions, for God doth suspend his grants to the times, when thou art fitted to receive them, and when it is fit for him to open them.

Is it sin that thou wouldst have subdued? Doe thou seek his subduing power, and with-  
all,

all, decline inviting occasions either from thy selfe or others, and then God will heare thee. Now thou art fitted, and now is it fit for God to help thee; but if thou wilt pray against the disposition, and runne still upon the occasion, God will not answer thee.

Is it grace and eavenesse in duty which thou wouldest have? Then thou must use former grace, and stick close with humbleness, and diligence, and reverence to the meanes, and now God will supply all thy wants. Untill thou hast a more humble and doing heart, thou art not fitted for more grace. *God giveth more grace to the humble, saith James.*

James 4.

I say, he will give thee more grace; Thou shalt have enough for thy condition, and enough for thy salvation, although thou hast not such an equall measure with others, whom  
God



God intends for more publique use and service, then he doth thee.

5. Gods forbearings should not occasion cessation, but earnestnesse: He is not silent, that we thereby should become speechlesse, but that our desires should grow more fervent.

*Simile.*

You know that the skilfull Angler doth not draw back his bait that the fish should not bite, but that by this meanes he should the more greedily leap after the bait.

And the tender mother steps aside, not that she would not have the child seek her, but that it may even dote after her.

*Jer. 11. 8.*

So doth God many times draw back and step aside, and as the Prophet *Jeremie* speaks, *He becomes as a stranger, and as a way-faring man who turneth aside, &c.* And as *David* speaketh,

keth, *He is as one that sleeps.*  
 Why? What? Is it that hee  
 doth not know us? No. Is it  
 that he doth not hear us? No.  
 Is it that he will not speed  
 us? No.

Why then? Surely because  
 1. He delights in this musick,  
 he smells a sweet odour and sa-  
 vour in all our humble sacrific-  
 es, he delights in the broken  
 heart.

2. He loves that we should  
*strive with him for his grants,*  
 (that is the phrase, *Rom. 15. 30*)  
 and *wrestle with him,* (as *Jacob*)  
 and so *prevaile upon him*; And  
*that we should give him no rest,*  
 (*Esay 62. 7.*) *untill he hath sa-*  
*tisfied our soules with mercy,*  
*and established them with his*  
*grace.*

3. He would inhance the  
 goodnesse of the things desi-  
 red, and make us to weare the  
 answers with more thankful-  
 nesse to himselfe, with more  
 com-

*He knowes  
 our  
 thoughts  
 long before.*

*His eare is  
 open, and  
 before they  
 call I will  
 answer.  
 Esa.*

*Whiles  
 they are  
 speaking, I  
 will an-  
 swer.*

*Loc. cit.*

*Ro. 15. 30.*

*Hos. 12. 3, 4*

*Esa. 62. 7.*



comfort to our selves, and with more benefit to others.

8. A ninth cause of doubtings was, weaknesse of judgment about the essentials of salvation, which necessarily doth cause doubtings, both in respect of those suspicions, and errors, & mistakings to which it is subject: as also in respect of that scrupulosity which ever adheres to the conscience, where weaknesse adheres to the judgment.

Now the remedy of this spring, consists in these particulars.

1. Get a distinct knowledge of Fundamentals: It is the emptinesse of our minds that we be preposterous in our searches. Many a Christian loseth himselfe in a sea of opinions, before he hath squared himselfe with the first grounds of Religion.

Remember this, that the  
first

first truths doe support and maintaine the rest, (as the corner-stone the rest of the building) and are as the originall Will, which decides many scruples in Law. Hence is it, that some men doubt about speciall conclusions, because they are ignorant of the generall principles; which were they distinctly knowne, the falsity of any conclusion would easily become evident unto them. Men usually dispute first, and know last: As if a Souldier would range an Army, before he hath learned to handle his weapons. How ordinary is it to heare disputes of Originall sin, of Predestination, of Redemption, of Faith and Justification, of Assurance and Obedience, of the degrees of grace and duty, of the direct and absolute way of life? &c. I say it is ordinary to heare some arguing of these, who yet are

*Simile.*

*Simile.*

*Ergo, saith Paul, Rom. 14. 1. Him that is weak in the faith, receive you, but not to doubtful disputations.*



Heb. 6. 1.

True  
knowledg  
is as the  
day wher-  
in wee  
walk more  
stedfastly;  
and igno-  
rance like  
the night,  
in which  
we are full  
of feares,  
and often  
stumble.

are ignorant of the nature of these. But,

*Pauls* method was to lay down his foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God : which if *Paul* thought fit to teach, I think fit for us to learne. That Ship rowls least, which is well bottomed; and that house shakes least, which is well founded; and that Christian doubts least, who is well grounded in the maine points of Religion : For besides this, that Primitive truths give an aime to all truths, so likewise they uncase all errors, and heresies, and opinions, and arguments which come to pervert the mind another way. And surely when the mind obtaines an evidence by one truth for another, and by truth also of error contrary unto it, it is in the least hazard of doubting; for as much as doubtings ordinarily

dinarily arise from some error or mis-apprehension in the minde.

2. Get a distinguishing knowledge of Fundamentals from Accessories. Every part of the house is not the corner-stone, or the pillars: A man may take away much, and yet the house may stand: If you take away the painting and musick, or some feelings and annexed posts, yet the house may stand.

*Simile.*

So may a Christians salvation, though he know not many accessory truths; nay, although hee mistake about them; nay, although he deny them, if this denyall be not accompanied with a proud perversnesse, but arise onely from inevidence and inability.

There are three things, about which it were good for Christians to have a distinguishing knowledge, viz.

I. Fun-



Three  
things.

1. Fundamentalls.

2. Consequents.

3. Indifferents.

Fundamentals, -I call those Truths which take up the work and way of salvation; as the doctrine of sinne, and of Christ, and faith, and repentance, &c. for these are such things, without the knowledge of which, no man can be saved.

Consequents, I call those illations or inferences which doe flow from the primitive truths, either *virtute rei*, in the nature of the thing, just as a streame flowes from the fountaine; or *virtute intellectus*, in the judgement of the person, as the conclusion is made by such or such a mans conjecturall opinion, to flow from such a principle or such a Text.

Indifferents, I call those actions which in themselves are neither holy nor evill;  
neither

neither is a man by any expresse command from God, (*specificative*) injoynd them, or (*specificative*) prohibited them: Which things considered absolutely, if a man doth use them, he shall not be saved; if he doth not, he shall not be damned. They doe no more constitute a Christian, then a garment doth a man; which whether he doth weare it yea or no, yet still he is a man.

Now this distinguishing knowledge doth exceedingly asswoyle the doubting heart, which doth oft times shake and rowle about the lawfulness of indifferents, &c.

3. Reduce all conjectures and consequent truths unto the first truth: It is the counsell of the Apostle, *1 Thes. 5. 21. Prove all things*: And the Prophet *Esaiah, To the Law, and to the testimony. Esa. 8. 20.*

Yet actiōs in themselves indifferent, in respect of circumstances, may be offensive & sinfull. See Rom. 14. 14, 15, &c.

It



It was a good speech of S. *Austine* to *Manicheus*, contesting with him for audience, Heare me, Hear me, said *Manicheus*, Nay, saith S. *Augustine*, *Nec ego te, nec tu me, sed ambo audiamus Apostolum, dicentem, Peccatum non cognovi, &c.*

Beloved, we may see what weak creatures we are: when truths fall downe amongst us, and when we sit in the Tribunal; alas, what distractions, what severall stamps doe our severall opinions set on them! what distinctions, limitations, qualifications! We will be sure every one of us to handle the question so, that it shall be so far true, as may stand with our owne delights, profits, aimes and ends; We do many times for personall respects, discourse and determine of truths.

But now reduce them to the first truths, how do our empty and contrary opinions and  
fancies

fancies clatter and shiver to dust? they fall downe before the word of God, as Dagon did before the Arke of God; for the Scriptures are the touch-stone which will easily decide counterfeit glosses and errors from genuine and proper truths: Genuine truths are like the young Eagles, that can with open eyes behold the light of the Sun, and erroneous glosses and opinions are like sore eyes which cannot behold the Sun without twinckling, and watering, and closing.

And note by the way, that if the truth be the truth of God, it doth tend to these three things: viz.

1. *The glory of his rich grace,*  
*Eph. 1. 12.*

2. *Settling of peace in the conscience,* *Rom. 5. 1.*

3. *Mortifying of sinne,* *Titus 2. 12.*

4. *Establisth the minde in*  
L de-



declared truths. *Beware*, saith the Apostle Peter, (*seeing yee know these things*) lest ye being led away with the error of the wicked, fall away from your owne stedfastnesse.

A&. 13. 10.

It is not unknowne, that some (like Pedlars) wander up and downe, and make a living by their errors; subtrill people, and crafty to their owne confusion, who have only a strength of parts to glosse over sins and errors, and to weaken the strength of truths and wayes to heaven: Most rendring children of Satan, for they cease not to pervert the right wayes of the Lord. And yet so artificially do they vent their wares, so neatly do they set them out with the applause of reason and carnall licentiousnesse, that many weak headed Christians swallow up their baits, drink up their cups, lick in their tumultuous  
and

after, are cleare, expresse; hee who runnes may reade them.

Busie thy self most in these; study to be a good man, and a good master; a good man, and a good servant, &c. Exercise thy selfe to know what concerns thee, and then to pray thy selfe into the practise of that. This is a wise way, and settled, and which is exempted from vaine turmoiles and many judiciall doubtings.

6. Informe the conscience with the nature of a Christian and saving condition: Some things are required towards saluation, some things unto saluation; some things give a being, other things a comfortable being; Of all which if a person had a speciall and distinct knowledge, hee might walke more quietly without feares and doubtings. Shall I give you an hint of some par-



Four particulars worthy of weak christians distinct consideration.

Ro. 7. 7, 9.

Rom. 8. 15

Mat. 11. 28

*Simile.*

particulars? Remember then these Propositions.

1. Preparations to Grace are different and unequall: All men are not prepared by the same degrees, or in the same manner for Christ: Conviction of the naturall estate, and attrition, and anguish, and those legall operations, these are preparations: for men must know their sinfull condition, they must have the *spirit of bondage*, they must be *heavy*, and *weary*, before they can lay hold on Christ.

Now those legall impressions are different: Every Believer (of ripe yeares) hath felt them, more or lesse, yet all cannot say alike. Every child feels something in his birth, but some children are brought forth with more paines, and others with lesse difficulty. *Lydia* was quickly delivered, but *Paul* lies by it some dayes.  
Some

Some people can say, as *David* in another case, *Sorrow endured for a night, but joy came in the morning*: Others may say as the same *David*, *Night and day thy hand was heavy upon me.*

The Lord is pleased (for he is an arbitrary Agent both for the matter and manner in our spirituall alteration) to single out some persons, & to charge their sinnes deep upon their consciences, and to pursue them with singular terrors, to stick his arrows and their own sins so close that they know not which way to turne themselves. He doth almost grinde them to powder, and casts them to the dust, and to the lowest amazements and distractions; and then as the skilfull Artificer, who hath bruised, and battered, and broken the masse into pieces, and throwne it into the fire, and melted it, hee yet at length

Some persons greatly prepared.



takes it out, and fashions from all this, a most comely, and precious, and usefull vessell: So doth the Lord many times with some people, he returnes them their old finnes, and powerfully mingles the Law and their finnes, and their consciences together, and so with that hammer bruiseth and breaks their sinfull hearts, and with that fire melts them and dissolves them as it were; yet after a long and sad time of sensible conviction and horrible bondage, hee graciously formes the Lord Jesus in their hearts, and renewes his blessed image of grace, and they become the most acceptable vessels of glory.

Others  
gently  
prepared.

But with other persons hee deals not in this high measure; He doth indeed arrest them with the Law, but doth not so fetter and iron them; he doth not so imprison them, but up-  
on

on their falling downe he is pleased to release them from their guilt and feares, and to *deliver them from the powers of darknesse, into the marvellous liberty of the sons of God.*

Therefore know this, that when God hath attained his end, he ceaseth in this way of legall operation.

What is his end? wil you say.

I answer, his end is in these legall preparations,

1. To evidence unto a man the foulness of his heart and life

2. To convince him of a total unworthinesse.

3. To produce most inward dislikes of such an abominable thing as sin is.

4. To make a man willing, upon Gods owne conditions, to take and receive Christ.

These are the ends, which being in some sooner, in others later, accomplished, the Lord

L 5

doth

Note.

Quest.  
Sol.

Legall troubles & workings cease, when God attains his end:

Which is in some sooner, & in some later.



doth cease the workings of preparation.

*Simile.*

You know that if a piece of stone or wood will break with one or two blows, we spare the rest; and if the masse will yeeld in one dayes firing, we then let it out : So, &c. But if yet the knottinesse be great, and resistance long, then knotty wood must have iterated blows, and un-yeelding metall must have the greater fire.

From all this, the doubtfull heart may perhaps be settled about his estate in grace: Aske him, Dost thou love God? I doe: Serve him with all thy might in all thy wayes? I do: Rest upon Jesus Christ? I do: Combat and war against sin? I doe; and yet I feare all is not right: Why? Because I never had such terrors as others. Now then informe thy weak judgment, If God hath shewn unto thee thy sinfulness, If he hath

hath abated thee, and emptied thee of thy self, If sin and thou are now at defiance, If thou hast yeelded unto the receiving of Christ upon his owne termes and conditions, though thy legall preparations were not answerable to others, either for intension of strength and measure, or for extension of length and time, yet thy condition is good and safe: For that humiliation which is accompanied with these issues, is assuredly blessed and comfortable. If the physick carries away the humour, though it doe not make the person so sick, yet it is good: And though a man want a storme to drive him to shore, yet is he safe enough, if he be landed with a softer gale and tide.

*Simile.*

2. The operations of Grace are also different and unequall, notwithstanding that Christians may have one common prin-



principle, and the same external means of grace. I beseech you observe this.

1. There is one and the same (specificall) seed of regenerating grace in all Christians; the same spirit of holiness, of faith, of repentance, of love, &c. All Christians are bottomed alike, and rooted alike for the substantiall part of Grace.

2. That many Christians may live under the same means of Grace, as many people doe live under the same light and heat of the Sun, and children under the same parents.

3. That the exercises of their graces may yet be different: as children having the same schoole, may yet sit in severall formes; and having the same food, may yet have severall agilities and abilities.

*Simile:*

So Christians, who have the same principles of beleeving, and repenting, and praying, and doing, and who have the same ministry, and common assistances, may yet vary and differ in the active part of graces and duties. One may know more then another, one may rest upon Gods Promises more then another, one may pray with more fervencie then another, one may do the other parts of duty more then another, &c. yet all of these may have truth of grace, and may be saved.

Therefore know, that inequality of holy operation doth not spring from nullity or falsesse of Grace, but sometimes from the variety of particular occasions, sometimes from the variety of particular ends, sometimes from the variety of particular assistance. Every Christian hath not alike,

Inequality  
of holy  
operation,  
whence.

I. For-



1. Forcible occasion to exercise his faith and patience:

Nor 2. doth God intend every Christian for some singular ends and services, to which hee fits others by the greater improvement and use of their graces.

3. Neither hath every man at all times an equall gale or breath of spirituall assistance to enlighten him, to excite, and affect, and draw him. I might also adde,

4. Neither doth every Christian stir up the gifts and graces in him; hee doth not wisely on all occasions and motions improve his stock.

Neither 5. hath every man a like temper & constitution, which conduceth much to the actions of the soule.

6. Neither doth every calling admit unto every Christian those spaces, and leasures, and remissions, or vacations, which

which some have to set on their heavenly frame and course.

It is with true Christians, as with true men ; Every man hath a soule, and faculty from that soule, and actions issuing out of those faculties; yet every man is not equall in the expressive wayes of nature : So is it with Christians, all have truth of grace alike, but the exercise of it is different and personall.

3. As the actions, so the degrees of Grace are different : Compare Christian with Christian, it is as if you should compare one branch and limbe of a tree with another ; where though all be set in one common root, yet their particular measures are more and lesse. Or as if one did compare the Stars together, where though all be interested in the heavenly orbes, yet they differ among

*Simile.*

Branches.

Stars.



Sheepe.

among themselves in respect of magnitude and light.

Members.

1 Cor. 12. 27

*Ye are the body of Christ, (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. 27.) and members in particular;*

this was a glorious and gracious condition: But then, ver. 29.

Eph. 4. 11.

*Are all Apostles? are all Prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? doe all speake with tongues? Nay, Eph. 4. 11. He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers.*

As gifts for edification, so graces for sanctification are different.

Now as this holds firme enough in various degrees of singular gifts for edification, so likewise it is as evident in those speciall graces for sanctification: For, Are all in the fold of Christ, sheepe? There are some lambes: (*Peter* is commanded to feed both, *Ergo* there are both.) Are all in the garden of Christ, Cedars? There are some tender Vines.

Are

Are all in the household of Christ, strong men? There are some young, there are some babes in Christ too. So *Heb. 5. 13.* and *1 Joh. 2. 12, 13.* *I write unto you, little children, because your sinnes are forgiven you, and because you have knowne the Father.* You see little children there, as well as young men and fathers; and these children, though children, though little children, though very tender Christians, yet they know the Father, and they had pardon of sin.

Brethren, how exceedingly doe we disturbe our selves with doubtings here? Many people, through a weaknesse (I say no more) of judgement, doe fall out with their estate and condition, molest and afflict their hearts, close up all against themselves, suspect, and foolishly reason and argue the nullity of a gracious condition,

1 Joh. 2.  
12, 13.



Note.

dition, from the imperfections which they observe in their graces, from their behindments in faith, and zeale, and sorrow, &c. Ah ignorant people! who are truly industrious after the great measures of Grace, and will not yet quiet their feares, and still their doubtings with this,

1. That such earnest pantings, and inquietations, and unsatisfiablenesses cannot but spring from truth of grace.

2. Then, that where grace is in truth, though in the lowest measure, there the soule hath interest in Christ, in all the Promises, in God, in heaven, in all.

Remember this, He who hath least in grace, hath not that which he would have; and hee who hath most in grace, hath not that which he should have; and he who hath any truth of grace, hath enough

nough to change his heart, and save his soule. I would beleeve in that fulnesse of assurance and reliance as thou dost, and if I cannot, I will yet beleeve as well as I can. He who said, *O woman, great is thy faith*, said also to another, not so strong, *Thy faith hath saved thee*. No man misseth of heaven for want of measure, but of truth. Our consolation lies much in the comparative degree, but our salvation is in the positive: Much grace will yeeld unto us here our heaven, and any grace, if true, will yeeld us heaven hereafter.

4. The separable fruits of true grace are different, not only if you compare one Christian with another, but if you compare the same Christian with himselfe in divers times and occurrences.

1. If you compare Christian with Christian in respect of com-



Esa. 50. 10  
Light.

Psal. 30. 7.

Joy.

51. 12.

As Simcon.

As Paul.

2 Tim. 1. 12

1 Pet. 1. 8.

comfortables, it is night with one, when it is day with another: One goes on heavily oppressed, *walking in darknesse*, (that is the Prophets phrase, *Esay 50. 10.*) He hath not that sensible light of divine favour, (*Thou hidst thy face*, said David, *and I was troubled*, *Psal. 30. 7.*) He hath not that sensible joy or testimony of his gracious condition, (*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation*, *Psal. 51. 12.*) How many mourners are there in Zion? Many who lament the absence of favour, of joy, of peace.

Yet some others there are who doe beleeve, and doe rejoyce in beleeving: They see Christ in their armes, they know whom they have beleaved, and rejoyce with joy unspeakable and glorious, 1 Pet. 1. 8.

2. If you compare the same Christian with himselfe: For it is with our day of grace, as  
in

many doubts. For the cure and remedy of which, be pleased to consider of some particular Propositions, which I will lay downe, to unfold the businesse and comforts of Justification unto beleeving penitents; for to these onely I adresse my speech.

1. In Justification, our debts are charged upon Christ: they goe upon his accounts. You know that in sin, there is the vicious and staining quality of it, and then there is the resulting guilt of it, which is the obligation of a sinner over to the judgement seat of God, to answer for sin.

Now this guilt, (in which lies our debt) this is charged upon Christ: Therefore (saith the Apostle) *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: And, hath made him to be sinne for us, who knew no sinne*

2 Cor. 5. 19

me,



*Simile.*

Heb. 7. 22.  
*Jesus was  
 made a  
 surety of a  
 better te-  
 stament.*

*Fidejussor*

Esa. 53. 4, 5

You know in Law, the wifes debts are charged upon the husband; and if the debtor be disabled, then the creditor sues the surety. *Fidejussor*, or surety, and *Debitor* in Law, are reputed as one person: Now Christ is our *Fidejussor*, *He is made sin for us*, saith the Apostle: For us, (i.) *vice nostra*, or *loco nostro*, (i.) in our stead. A surety for us, one who put our scores on his accounts, our burden on his shoulder: So the Prophet, *Esa. 53. He hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* How so? *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: (i.)* He stood in our stead, he took upon him the answering of our sinnes, the satisfying of our debts, the clearing of our guilt, and therefore was it that he was so bruised, &c.

ev. 16. 21

You remember the scape-  
 it is so at, *Upon his head, all the ini-  
 quities*

quities of the children of Israel,  
and all their transgressions, in all  
their sins, were confessed and put.

*And the Goat did beare upon  
him all their iniquities, &c.*

22.

What is the meaning of this?

Surely Jesus Christ, upon

Christ.

whom our sins were laid, and

who alone died for the ungod-

ly, and bare our burdens away.

Therefore the Beleever in the

sense of guilt should run unto

Christ, and offer up his bloud

unto the Father, and say, Lord,

it is true, I owe thee so much,

yet Father forgive me, re-

member that thine owne Son

was my ransome, his bloud

was the price, he was my sure-

ty, and undertook to answer

for my sins; I beseech thee ac-

cept of his atonement, for he

is my Surety, my Redempti-

on; Thou must be satisfied,

but Christ hath satisfied thee,

not for himselfe, what finnes

had he of his owne? but for

M

me,



me, (gracious Father) they were my debts which he satisfied for; and look over thy book, and thou shalt find it so, for thou hast said, *He was made sin for us, and that he was wounded for our transgressions.*

Eph. 1. 7.

Now this is a great stay, a great comfort, that wee our selves are not to make up our accounts and reckonings, but that Christ hath cleared twixt us and God. Therefore it is said, *Ephes. 1. 7. that in his blood we have redemption, even the forgivenesse of sins.*

Jer. 33. 8.

2. In Justification, the beleeving penitent hath an universall discharge. What is that? That is, when a man is in Christ, when he is a true beleever, he doth not then receive a particular acquittance from such or such sins, but an universall discharge from all the sins he hath committed.

You know the promise, *Jer.*

33. 8.

35. 8. *I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.* 9. *And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and honour, &c.*

Therefore David speaking of Gods fulnesse and extent of pardoning and remitting mercy, he saith, *Psal. 85. 2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sinne. Selah.* Which covering of all sinne, is in sense the same with the Apostles not imputing of sin, *Rom. 4.* and *2 Cor. 5.*

*Psal. 85. 2.*

This is a true axiome, *Pecata non minuunt justificationem;* Though sins be different, yet justification is not. When the Lord God justifies a person, the different qualities and circumstances of former sins doe not hinder their pardon and discharge. You know that one may with a pen crosse a great summe as well as a little  
M 2                      summe;



*Simile.*

summe; and a King can give a pardon not onely for petty offences, but also for rebellions and treasons, and so he doth many times. It is therefore an observable passage in holy Writ, that there is scarce a sin in any kind, but we may read the blotting of it unto a beleeving and repenting person: *viz.*

Note.

Justification reacheth all sorts of debts.

Original sin, which was the great deluge of our natures, and the first fire which inflamed the whole world of mankind, yet this sin was pardoned to *Adam*.

Drunkennesse, another sin which the Apostle (in *1 Cor. 6. 8.*) raiseth to the height of eternall separation, yet was it pardoned to *Noah*, a beleeving penitent.

Lying, another sin, which is of it selfe apt to lock the gates of heaven, (*Rev. 22. 15.*) yet was it pardoned to *Abraham*,  
the

the father of the faithfull.

Incest, that unnaturall commixture, yet pardoned to *Lot*.

Murder, a crying sinne, and Adultery, a fearfull sinne, yet both pardoned unto a repenting and beleeving *David*.

Idolatry, that angriuing and provoking sinne, a sin which unthrones God, and makes a god, yet pardoned unto *Solomon*.

What should I mention more? Impatience, a sin, yet pardoned to *Job*.

Passion, a sin, yet pardoned to *Jonah*.

Denyall of Christ, against knowledge and resolution, a high sin, (and such as a Donatist upon no termes would admit, as capable of a re-acceptation) yet graciously pardoned to *Peter*.

Persecuting of the Gospel of Christ, blasphemy, and



compelling of others to blaspheme, (*i.*) injuriously and despitefully to oppose Jesus Christ, his word, his members, O how piercing and bleeding a sin! yet pardoned to *Paul*, he obtained mercy.

Oppression and covetousnesse, by which a man doth suck the bloud and life of others, yet pardoned to *Zachew.*

And all  
sorts of  
debtors.

Nay yet once more, as you may see pardon in Justification releasing all sorts of debts, so you shall find it releasing all sorts of debtours. Take one place for all, in *Levit. 4.* where the Lord goes over all sorts and divisions of sinners, and appointed offerings for them all, and proclaimes pardon to them all: *viz* First, the Priests, *ver. 3.* Then secondly, the whole congregation, *ver. 13.* and 20. Then thirdly, a Ruler, *ver. 22, 26.* Then fourthly, any one

one of the common people,  
*ver. 27, 28, 31, &c.*

Under which foure ranks,  
 he draws in all sorts and con-  
 ditions of men ; and not one-  
 ly appoints a sin-offering for  
 them all, but also accepts of  
 the same : By which, what is  
 else meant but the power and  
 efficacie of the bloud of  
 Christ, by which all sorts of  
 sins are pardoned to all sorts  
 of beleeving and repenting  
 sinners ?

Ah Lord! will many a per-  
 son cry out. Why ? What is the  
 matter ? Why art thou so hea-  
 vy ? Why, such and such a sin  
 heretofore.

I reply, Is there not a Justi-  
 fication ? Yes : And how comes  
 sin to be pardoned ? Is it not  
 by the bloud of Christ ? Yes :  
 But these were great sins ; And  
 did Christ die for the expiation  
 of little sins onely ? What, did  
 he satisfie for infirmities only,

*Ob.*

*Sol.*



& not for enormities also? And doth Christ indeed leave the greatest debts for us to cleare? Or cannot faith receive the acquittance of great sins, as well as indeliberated sins? Was not the sin-offering for all sorts of persons? And have not all sorts of sinnes come within the Proclamation? No, no, my brethren, Justification (without all doubt) crosseth the book. Thou art a debtor, saith God: I am, Lord, saith the penitent, I acknowledge my sins, and am sorry for my transgressions, but I intend to run on the score no longer. Thou art a debtor, saith God; I am, Lord, saith the Beleever, and thou hast said, *If any man sin, he hath an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for sins, and I beleeve on him* Lord; I take him to be my sin-offering, and in his blood one-ly

1 Joh. 2. 1.

ly I seek for pardon and redemption from all my finnes ; This were the way to support our selves against our many and strong doubtings about pardon of sins ; Yet the Lord knowes I have repented of them, and I doe belceve in Jesus Christ for the pardon of them, I heare and know that he is the Mediator of the New Testament, and that his bloud satisfies for all sorts of debtors, and debts too ; Though one sin may differ from another, yet his merit and satisfaction differs not from it selfe, but is all-sufficient ; and therefore I acknowledge the debt, and rest on his bloud for a full discharge.

3. Discharges in Justification are not repealed, they are not called in againe. *Peccata non redeunt*, (i.) Subsequent sins and falls doe not nullifie and evacuate former grants



and pardons : for as much as  
 1. Pardon of sin springs from  
 speciall love and mercy, which  
 alter not their consigned acts.  
 2. It is founded in an unaltera-  
 ble, and absolute, and con-  
 stant satisfaction; for sinne is  
 not pardoned for any dignity  
 in the person. In the person  
 pardoned, there is no reason or  
 cause of pardon, but that is in  
 the bloud of Christ, which  
 bloud alters, and lessens, and  
 abates not, though our carria-  
 ges doe.

Hence it is that pardon of  
 sin in Justification, is styled  
*the blotting out of the hand-wri-  
 ting*, Col. 2. 14. If a writing be  
 blurred a little, and somewhat  
 blotted, yet it may be read;  
 but if it be blotted out, it is no  
 more legible; and who can be  
 called to account upon record  
 when the writings are oblite-  
 rated? The same phrase is used,  
*Esay 44. 22. I have blotted out*

*as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy finnes.*

Where me thinks something else falls in to our comfort, *viz.* That God himselfe doth blot out. Though an under-officer should blot out an indictment, that perhaps may help nothing; but when the King doth it, who is chiefe Judge, then the indictment cannot returne.

Now it is the Lord himselfe who doth blot out transgressions; he doth it, who onely hath power of life and death, of condemning or absolving.

In like manner there is another phrase, *Mica. 7. 19. Thou wilt cast all their finnes into the depths of the sea.* If a thing were cast into a river which might be fathomed, then it might be brought up againe; or if it were cast upon the sea onely, yet it might be discerned, and taken up againe; but when it  
is



is in the depths, cast into the depths, the bottome of the sea, now it cannot be fathomed up againe.

By which Metaphor the Lord intends to expresse unto us the powerfull energy of pardoning mercy, that our sins shall rise no more against us; He will cleare them so, that they (being once forgiven) shall come on the account no more: He will drowne their guilt, that it shall not come up against us before him the second time.

Therefore *Paul* discoursing of Justification, *Rom. 4.* hee useth another phrase to expresse this point, *ver. 7. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

Covered: Covering is such an action which is opposed to disclosure, and judicall evidences; and to be covered, is to be hid so, and closed, as not

to appeare with a judiciall guilt upon it.

Now the Lord here is said to cover sinne in Justification: What is that? That is, the Lord will look on those sinnes no more with a judiciall eye, he will not call them to account any more, that is the meaning of the phraze.

As when a Prince reads over many Treasons, and meets with such and such which he hath pardoned, he reads on, he passeth by, he now takes no notice of them, he is not stirred, he sends not out against those whom he hath pardoned: So, &c. This is for God to cover sin, *viz.* not to looke on the sin pardoned with a judiciall eye. It is not, as some most empty and dull heads fancie it, God doth not see sin at all, and he cannot. Of all the opinions in the world, this is the most ridiculous and childish



disto men who beleieve an All-seeing God: But to cover sin, is not simply not to see it, but to look it over as it were, and not to sit or stand upon it with a judicial eye, (i) to account for pardoned sinnes no more.

Hence in the New Covenant, God promising to justifie or to pardon sin, he saith not onely, *I will forgive their iniquity*, but addes, *I will remember their sin no more*, Jer. 31. 34. What is that? That is, if I once forgive their sin, I wil not forgive it againe, it shall not need againe to be forgiven, once shall serve the turne, I will remember it no more. The meaning is, it shall quite be forgotten, I will no more plead with them for what I have once pardoned.

I confesse, that the sense, and fruit, and assurance of a sin pardoned, this may (*redire*) returne;

As the Gospel needs to be give but once, so a mans sin needs but once to be forgiven: once is enough: because if once, then for ever.

Note.

returne ; this may be lost and got ; and the acts of faith concerning the particular pardon of a particular sin, may doe so, but Gods justifying act, his pardoning act is a free and constant act : Otherwise if he pardoned us respectively upon an absolute Incestation about sinne, there were no flesh living that could be justified.

4. Discharges in Justification reach not onely to the guilt, but also to the consequents of guilt : For it is a true rule, *Justificatio tollit pœnalia*. Therefore saith the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 1. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*. You know that if the body falls, then the shadow which attends the body, that falls too ; and if the debt be discharged, the prison is discharged. We have by the bloud of Christ the forgivenesse of our sins, and therefore the remission

The apprehensio of pardon is variable, and yet the pardon it self is immutable.

And, *remissa culpa, remittitur pœna*



mission of all satisfying punishments: Why else doth the Apostle say, *Gal. 3. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us?* As Christ is said to be *made sin for us*, *2 Cor. 5.* so is he here said to be *made a curse for us*. He is made sinne for us, by taking upon him the guilt of our sinnes; and he is made a curse for us, by bearing that wrath and punishment which was due to us because of our sinnes.

Nay, let me speak a bold truth; To have sinne remitted, and yet to be exposed to punishment, (I speak onely of satisfying punishment) cannot stand with that unspotted justice of God; for no man is justly punished but by reason of unsatisfied guilt. (*In peccato fundatur reatus poena*, saith Aquinas well.) Now if Christ hath fully and perfectly satisfied for the  
the

the guilt, then punishment hath no ground, unlesse wee will say that God will punish for that which is already satisfied; or that Christs satisfaction is not totall, but partiall, (i.) he satisfied for a part, and left some parts. of satisfying punishment to us, which is the opinion of the Papists for their humane satisfactions.

But to draw up again; What a comfortable stay and support is this unto a distressed soule, to see and find all in Christ? When a person brought to the true sight and sense of sin, and loathing and forsaking of it, and to the giving of himselfe up unto Christ, shall behold his many fore-past guilts, and see these charged upon Christ, nay and discharged by Christ, nay and so discharged that they shall never be charged upon him againe, nay and all the consequents of guilt removed,



removed, so that Christ hath set him at liberty, he hath made him a freeman, and that against all Satans accusations: He may hold out the bloud of Christ, which will answer all; I am a sinner, but *Christ was made sin for me*; I deserve damnation, but *Christ was made a curse for me*. If Beleevers did skill the nature, and extent, and vertues of remission by the bloud of Christ; if they did know, and were possessed more with this part of Justification, they would strengthen their faith and their comfort more, and their doubtings and fears would sink more. *Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

5. One thing more, which I had almost forgotten, falls in, which is this, That the substantiall part of Justification is alike to all Beleevers. What is that? It is this, God for the  
bloud

bloud of Christ doth not onely charge the sins of strong beleevers on Christ, but of weak beleevers too; and these onely are not discharged, but those also. True faith in any degree may take out all the benefits of Justification. For as Justification doth not admit of degrees, no more is it made over to the degrees, but to the truth of faith: So that not onely *Abraham*, the father of the faithfull, who was strong in faith, but the father of the child, who cryed out with tears, *I beleeve, help mine unbelief*, he also hath all the reall interests, the very same reall interests in the bloud of Christ.

You know the arme hath not an interest in the head and influences thereof, because it is big, or because it is strong, but because it is a member, by reason whereof the least finger,



ger, and weakeſt member doth alſo claime and hath a ſhare. So becauſe every Beleeuer by true faith is made a member of Chriſt, he hath therefore a concurrent ſhare in the bloud of Chriſt, in the Juſtification purchaſed by Chriſt.

And therefore it is a weaker argument of weak beleevers to deny, or doubt their diſcharge by Chriſt.

*Ob.*

True, ſay they, Chriſt is a ſtrong Saviour, and hath ſtrong merits, and by him is pardon of ſinne, and by his Name a perſon is juſtified, but this is onely for men of ſtronger faith then mine.

*Sol.*

Doe not deceive, nor unneceſſarily afflict thy ſelfe, Chriſt hath done great matters for great ſinners, and a weak faith is a joynt poſſeſſor, though no faith can be a joynt purchaſer of ſins remiſſion.

And thus have I briefly informed

formed you with some notions about that part of Justification, which respects our sinnes; there is yet another part, which respects our graces and duties: from the weaknesse and mixture of which, do arise many doubtings, and such as are not to be disputed downe by any thing in our selves, but onely to be answered with the doctrine of Justification.

O. saith the humbled sinner, and experienced in himselfe, what a broken estate is here! what an imperfect draught of holinesse! My very light is dim, and in all my duties there is yet undutifulnesse; my righteousness is defective, in my faith much unbelieve, in my prayers much coldnesse, irreverence, distraction; & when I have sorrowed for my sins, I may even grieve for grieving no more, and may hate my selfe, that I cannot other-  
wile

*Ob.*



wise hate my sins: How can I stand before God, who is of purer eyes then to behold sin? Will the Lord accept of such a person, of such discharging of duties? &c.

*Sol.*

Let me stop the complaint, & close up the doubtings with a little more enlargement of the doctrine of Justification: Therefore remember,

1. Our persons stand not before God in their own righteousness, nor our owne services in their owne strength. Indeed the Lord requires holiness in our natures, and holy duties from us; we are his children, we are his people, therefore we should be holy as our Father is holy, therefore the people of his pasture should serve him. An unholy Beleever were a monster upon earth, and an undutifull son is a plain unbeleever; for though Christ did die for those who were  
once

once rebellious, yet he dies for none to make them licentious: So that holinesse, inherent grace is absolutely required to salvation.

To salvation I say,

But to Justification in no wise. What is that? That is, though a man cannot be saved without inherent holinesse, yet is he not justified by it; When he comes to account it with God, he may not say this, Lord, loe, here I am, see if there be any sin in my person, or defect in my holinesse; I have not offended thee, I need not any help, any mercy; my heart is totally cleane, and my duties performed at all times in every respect for matter and manner to the full as thou requirest: Enter into judgment with me if thou pleasest, I will be tryed by my owne holinesse.

2. But in the righteousness of



\* So called, not as if the act of faith were our justifying righteousness, for that act is but 1. An perfect thing. 2. A transient thing. 3. A part of inherent holiness: but because faith only layes hold on, & makes us to fly unto & rely on the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

of Christ, I desire, saith Paul, to be found in him, not having my owne righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Phil. 3. 9. See more in Rom. 5. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 2 Cor. 5. 21.

There is such a thing as the \* righteousness of faith; it is none other then the righteousness of Christ: (We think little of it, we make little use of it; there is a kind of Popery in us all; we look downward too much on our righteousness for a Justification) and when we are to be pronounced just and righteous, when either we or our services expect acceptation, it is in and by that righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Whence two things arise to keep doubtings and feares off, viz.

1. That though our holiness

ness be weak, yet Christs is strong; that righteousness which justifies, is full. When we look upon our selves, Ah Lord! think we, How shall we appeare before God! How will he accept of us! Such poor, such weak, such sinfull, hollow people! I answer, Christs righteousness is full, his coat was seamlesse; ours is made up, and strangely cut, but his righteousness is compleat, and *He is made unto us righteousness*, yea, and that of God, 1 Cor. 1. 30. God hath set him out to be our righteousness, and he justifies us by it.

2. Though our services be weak, yet we are justified by Christs righteousness: *Aaron was to beare the iniquity of the holy offerings, Exo. 28. 38.* Their holy offerings had some unholy mixtures; but *Aaron* was to beare them, (*i.*) he was to take the iniquities away from

N . . . them,

And so it must be, or else wee could not truly be reputed just.



them, and to make the offerings accepted.

Christ is this *Aaron*, who by his righteousness covers all the blemishes, makes up all the weaknesses in holy duties.

Therefore my brethren, in all our approaches to God, we should not doubt. It is the Apostles own argument, *Heb. 10.21. Having such an High-priest over the house of God, 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. And ver. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, &c.* It is as if the Apostle had said, If men did know what a Christ they have, what a full righteousness there is in him, what he doth with it, how he justifies their persons, and justifies their services, pleads for them, beautifies them, ingratiates them with the Father, they would not doubt so much as they doe, they

they would be better perswaded of God, when they come and pray unto him.

I remember the Apostle hath an excellent phrase in *Heb. 9. 24.* that *Christ doth appear for us.* It is a Metaphor from a Lawyer; If a man hath a case, he goes to his Lawyer, and reports all to him, desires him to undertake the whole businesse, and upon the committing of the Case to him, he appears for his Plaintiffe, opens the Case, pleads for him before the Judge, and the Cause is carryed: So is it with Christ, he appears for us. (*i.*) When a poore sinner, a weak beleever comes to him, and opens his condition, his wants, his infirmities, Christ undertakes for him, he pleads for him, (he ever lives to make intercession) he moves his Father in his behalfe, brings out his righteousness, his bloud,

N 2                      and



and merits, and what he did and suffered for him, &c. And thus doth Christ for every particular service, duty, and prayer for him who beleeves on him.

The tenth cause of doubtings, was, disputation against the Promises.

O, saith the troubled and fearfull soule, all these promises which you produce and apply to my condition, they are nothing to me; they belong not to me: There is indeed goodnesse, and truth, a wonderfull worth in them, and they suit with my condition exactly, but I may not lay hold on them; I should but presume to take the bread which belongs to children, but not to dogs, not to such a sinner as I am.

Good Christian, doe but track thine owne spirit, or the spirit of any distressed in conscience,

science, thou shalt find this to be the last hold usually of unbelieve, namely, a reasoning against Gods Promises; the which reasoning is sometimes through meere tenderneſſe of ſpirit: as when the ſoule hath arguments to it ſelfe of that force, to represent a preſent incapacity of any good which God hath promiſed, and till they be removed, it dares not lay hold on the Promiſes; but if they could be ſatisfied, then it is drawne in to beleeve: But ſometimes there is a reaſoning againſt the Promiſes, through wilfulneſſe of ſpirit, as when all the arguments of a doubting ſinner are ſo clearly reſolved and answered by the expreſſe words of God, that the perſon cannot gainſay it; yet the perſon rather bends ſtill againſt the Promiſes, then labours to honour God in them by beleiving.



This later reasoning is an irrationall way, and unworthy of our abetting: I should think such a Christians doubtings to arise rather from a fixed and heavy melancholy, then any other speciall cause. Neverthelessse, somewhat to help the other Christian, who argues & reasoneth against the Promises, meerly out of tenderesse and feare of his right and title, I would commend a few things to his consideration.

1. No spirituall good is furthered, nor evill weakned by keeping the soule and Gods Promises asunder. Tell me seriously, Is not all our help for soule and body (in the full and whole latitude of it) couched in Gods Promises? Are they not our wells of salvation, and breasts of consolation, our sun and shield? and what vessell hath a poore sinner to draw with out of those wells? what mouth

mouth hath he to milk out those breasts but faith? It is faith which knits the Promises and our conditions together; it is faith which makes them to meet each other; And till the Promises meet (in their vertue and influence) with this condition of thy soule, thou shalt never be helped or bettered by them: Till the plaister and the wound doe meet, it will never be an helping nor healing plaister. Thou shalt be (*ut ieras*) as thou wast, and the Promise shall be (*ubi erat*) where it was, it shall never do thee good till thou dost apply it.

2. It is beleeving which must cleare our title. O, faith the Christian, if I knew that the Promises belonged unto me, I would then beleeve. I answer,

First, this is a preposterous course, and utterly impossible;



as if there could be any well-grounded perswasion of our interest, before we have any such interest. No, but personall perswasion is a consequent worke, it cannot be the antecedent or leading work. You must buy the lands, before you can be perswaded that they are yours.

But secondly, if ever you would cleare your title to the Promises, you must then beleeve; for it is faith which doth intitle you, and gives you interest and propriety. As the Apostle spake of a great good, *After ye beleaved, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, Ephes. 1. 13.* that I say in this case; If ever you would be perswaded that God seales his Promises unto you, then doe you first put your seal unto the Promises: Beleeve, and then thou shalt see the good of them to be thy good.

3. The ground of a Christians beleeving Gods Promises, must not be in him who is to apply them, but onely in him who makes them. O'this is it which gravels, and labyrinths, and still distresseth us, that we set up the grounds of faith in our selves, and not in God. We are loth to acknowledge that the sole ground of beleeving is to be found only in that God who promiseth.

It is said of *Abraham*, when God promised him a child in his old age, that *by faith he gave glory to God*: But how came he so to doe? The Text saith, that *He considered not his owne body, now dead*, when he was about an hundred yeares old, *nor the deadnesse of Sarahs wombe*; but he considered him who had promised, and was perswaded that what he *had promised*, hee was able also *to performe*. Why? This is the right course to eli-

Rom 4. 20

ver. 19.

ver. 21.



cite or draw out our beleeving: We must not consider our selves, but we must consider him who promiseth: Our reasons of beleeving must be found in him alone on whom we are to beleeve.

Therefore I beseech you to remember, that the Promises of God are not onely objects of faith, but they are also grounds of beleeving: They doe not onely containe excellent good for us, but likewise the motives to beleeve that good. Besides the goodnesse in them which respectively answers our conditions, and the presenting of that goodnesse unto us by way of gift, there is all reason conjoynd with these to affect our hearts to lay hold on them, namely,

1. A graciousnesse, that the Lord will freely and for his owne sake doe us all that good.

2. A

2. A fidelity, that the Lord who hath graciously promised, will also faithfully performe.

And 3. sufficiencie of power in God to make good unto us whatsoever word of goodnesse is gone out of his lips.

So that from all these, a Christian against all his doubtings may yet see ground to beleeve the Promises of God, because,

1. The Promises are the Declarations of God for good unto us.

2. They are willing Declarations, arising onely from the good will of our God.

3. He dispenseth the good in them to sinners freely, without any worthinesse or desert on their parts.

4. There is not any good promised, which God is not willing or able to make good.

Lastly, let any person beleeve on them, and he shall confesse



confesse that faithfull is that God who promised, and that that God who hath promised cannot lye.

But now on the contrary, If you look for grounds of beleeving in and from your selves, it cannot be that ever your hearts should be free from doubtings; If either you make your owne worthinesse the cause of beleeving, you shall never come to beleeve: This were not to receive good from God, but to buy and purchase it; and is absolutely against the nature of free promises, as also against the disposition of true faith, which empties us of our selves, and seeth the cause of all our good to be only in him who is All-goodnesse.

Or if you think that you must first finde the good in your selves which ye are to fetch from the Promises, you cannot

cannot then beleeve, you must unavoidably doubt still : because it is impossible for a sinner or a needy Christian ever to draw his helps out of himselfe, or to prevent the promises of God. As he cannot deserve any good from God promising, so he cannot bring any good to Gods promises. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, saith the Prophet, and he that hath no money : Come ye, buy and eat. yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* If thou be a thirsty person, here is all provision freely for thee.

Esa. 55.1.

4. Another thing which I would commend also to doubting Christians in this case, shall be this : Take some solid paines to cleare your entrance into Covenant with God : thereby you shall cleare your interest in all particular promises upon your occasions.  
There



Jer. 31. 33

32. 38

Eze. 36. 28

Hos. 2. 23.

Heb. 8. 10.

There is a gracious Covenant (spoken of in the Scripture) twixt God and his people: He makes us to be his people, and we take him to be our God. And when that Covenant is passed twixt God and a person, that there is a mutuall acceptation; then the Lord estates this person into all the particular promises: As when the woman and man enter into the covenant of mariage, now all is settled on her, and she hath title sufficient.

So when the Lord God and a sinner are married to each other, when they are entred into a Covenant, Thou art my God, and none else, my heart is thine, my life shall be thine, &c. The Lord saith unto such a one, And I am thine, & all my mercy is thine, my Christ is thine, my Promises thine: If thou needest any good for soul or body, all good is thine.

I assure thee, O Christian, if this were once out of doubt, that thou and God were entered into Covenant, thou wouldst not so much doubt thy title, or question thy right to apply any particular promise to any condition of exigence wherein thou lyest. *All are yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods. 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.*

5. Lastly, consider well, whether there be nothing in a Christ which may not be able to over-argue thy disputes against thy applying of the Promises. I remember that *Luther* in his *Commentary on Genesis* prescribes unto tempted persons one very compendious way to withstand all temptations whatsoever: Let Satan come any way, or the world any way, or sinne move any way, doe thou answer all with this onely, *Christianus sum*, I am a Christian; I may not yeeld

If this door were unlocked, all the roomes would easily be seene.

*Luthers*  
speech.



No looking on the Promises without a Christ.

yeeld to any sin, for I am a Christian. And surely me thinks this also might be a compendious way to resolve the doubtings of a Christian, *Christum habeo* I have a Christ. O Christian, if thou didst look more on thy Christ, thou mightst look more on the Promises: When wilt thou remember, that as there is no comfortable looking on God without a Christ, so there will be no confident looking on the Promises of God without a Christ?

Christ Jesus is thy *Jacobs* ladder, thy prayers get up by him, and Gods Promises come down by him: *All the promises of God are Yea and Amen in him, 2 Cor. .20.*

There was a Book in the Revelation which none of the Elders and Worthies could open, but yet the Lambe could open it: The Promises are a pre-

precious Book, every leafe drops myrrhe and mercy, yet the weak Christian cannot open it, nay he is afraid to open it, and to reade his portion there: Neverthelesse thy Christ can open the Promises for thee, and by thy Christ as thou mayst find a way for heaven hereafter, so mayst thou espie a way for thy comfort now.

And why, may Christ reply to the doubting Christian, art thou afraid to beleieve? to beleieve my Fathers word, and thy Fathers word? Did he ever faile any who trusted on him? Is hee not willing to give, who was willing to promise? Should he lose of his glory, if thou receivedst of his grace? Or shouldst thou lose of thy comfort, if thou shouldst beleieve in his promise? Dost thou not care for his good? Why then art thou troubled?



troubled? Or in good earnest, Wouldst thou enjoy that good? Why then dost thou not beleeve? Thou seest the worth of the commodity, but stickest at the price. Did my Father ever sell grace or mercy to any upon the price of their owne worthinesse? How canst thou imagine him to answer thee in justice, who yet deales with thee upon promises? And if worthinesse must be found, tell me, Who am I? Is a Christ of no worthinesse to thee? or of no worth with his Father and thine? I have dyed for thy soule, I have reconciled thy person, I have made God himselfe to be thine, and therefore his Promises to be thine.

If thou thinkest that God will start from his word, O thou erreſt: His Promise is made with Goodnesse, is sealed with Truth, and is ratified with my bloud.

If

If thou thinkest it is an inexorable and deafe eare to thy prayers, yet consider, it is alwayes an open and plyable eare to my merits. Come, then, I once gave my selfe for thee, and since that I have given my selfe to thee, Be not afraid, O thou of little faith: Look on me, and through me unto a God, so shalt thou see him fully gracious and mercifull, and holding forth the golden Scepter to thee. Look on me and through me unto the Promises, then shalt thou see them to be my purchase, and thy portion. Lay hold on them by faith, and enrich thy selfe with them, in so doing thou shalt please my Father, pleasure thy selfe, and honour thy Saviour.

11. The eleventh spring of doubtings, was, the suspension of divine favour. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,*  
said



said *David*. O, the hiding of Gods favour is more then the hiding of the Sun, or then the withdrawments of *David* from *Absalom* : It is even the time of our fainting, the sequestration of our soules and life. *Thy favour is life*, saith *David* againe.

Here now consider,

1. In these times of sequestration, a man hath just cause of trouble ; he should be moved at it, that he cannot behold his God in that graciousnesse as before, in that lovingnesse, in that light of his countenance. And verily there is not a Christian really sensible of the divine favour, who should not be as much perplexed in the clouding of it, as he was affected and gladdened in the rising and discovering of it.

Beloved, it is ill with that man who can equal'y beare  
up

up in the absence, as in the conceived presence of Gods favour; who is of that hard and unperceiving temper, as not to solace his soul in finding God to be gracious; and not to be abundantly disturbed in not apprehending the wonted manifestations of his loving favour. How excessively distressed is the Church in the Canticles, that her Beloved had withdrawn himself! And *David* doth in the violence of his distemper and jealousy, (whether culpably, I know not yet) strongly charge God (sure with much heaviness of heart) that he had forgotten to be gracious.

2. Nevertheless in the times of such suspension, it is an error, and a dangerous error, a fruitlesse error, absolutely to conclude against our God, or against our selves, of any present or hopeful interest  
in



in his blessed favour : Therefore remember these particulars.

1. Observe the wayes and times of the interception of divine favour. This is certain, that God hath ever some speciall end in the holding up of his countenance ; and we may and doe many times give him just cause and reason. In Scripture we may observe on our part ordinarily two occasions :

1. Some grosse sins, which indeed are as a thick cloud to hold up the blessed light of Gods countenance, for he is of purer eyes then to behold sin. These are the wall of separation, these shut the doore, and draw the curtaines, and doe like some closing rheume fall upon the eye, and indispose it to the comfortable enjoyment of the light : As we may see in *Dauids* two great sinnes  
of

of Adultery and Murder, they did suspend the presence, (*i.*) the comfortable presence of God, and held up the joy of his salvation, which he did so earnestly desire to be restored, *Psal.* 51. 11, 12.

2. Remisnesse and carelesnesse in our esteems and affections towards him in his Ordinances. When Christians come to a moderation, to a cooling of their spirituall fervour, to a more negligent acquaintance with God, and a more indifferent performance of holy services and duties; then the Lord holds back, and calls in the sensible light of his countenance: As a father doth alter the set of his looks towards his child, who is wanton upon his love, and lets downe the diligence of his just observance and duty.

Seethis in *Cant.* 5. 2. *Open to me (saith Christ) my sister, my love,*



*love, my dove, my undefiled.* Here was a gracious entreaty, and full of wooing compellations: What doth the Church now? Surely she stirs, she riseth, she runneth, she easily embraceth these calls of Christ; No, *ver. 3. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* What is this? She was carelesse, negligent, full of excuses, so those phrases import, of putting off the coat: For as the keeping on of cloathes was a sign of care and watchfulnesse, [*Nehem. 4. 23.*] so the putting them off was a signe of drowzinesse, of a disposition prepared for sleep or rest: Nay (she had washed her feet) which was another signe of her sleepy and negligent disposition; It being the manner in those hot countries (where ordinarily they went bare-footed) to wash their feet after their

their travel, & so prepare themselves to rest. The meaning of all which, is this: She made many pretences and delayes; all which did spring from an acquired sluggishnesse and remissnesse of spirit.

Now mark the issue, Though the Church did not rise to open, yet Christ, *ver. 4.* puts in his hand at the hole of the doore: (*i.*) Though she had neglected him in his Ministry, yet he sent into her heart a notable *item* of it by his Spirit, and then her bowels were moved for him. Why? What is the matter? Now *she rose, ver. 5. and opened the doore, ver. 6. but my Beloved had withdrawn himselfe, and was gone; I sought him, but could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

Here you see, that carelesnesse of duty causeth absence of favour: And when men are



negligent in the entertainments of the meanes of grace, God doth in a just wisdome go off with the sensible presence of his gracious favour.

2. Observe the wayes of regaining Gods favour suspended from us : What are those? will you say.

I answer,

1. Be affected for the losse: every abience of Gods countenance should trouble us, but the losse of his favour, that should grieve us. So was it with the Church there, *Cant.*

5. 4. *My bowels were troubled for him,* Or, My bowels sounded, rumbled, made a troublous noise. What doe these words intimate but an eminent disquietnesse, an hearty sorrow for so great a losse, springing from so great a remisnesse? I say an eminent disquietnesse; For where bowels are mentioned, there an  
emi-

eminent degree is suggested, either of commiseration, as in that of God to *Ephraim*, *Jer.* 31. 20. or of singular love and affection, as of the mother to the child, or of most sorrowfull affliction, as here.

Nay, so great was this sorrow and bewaylment, that *ver. 6.* her soule failed when he spake: *My soule failed (i.)* my soule went forth, it was gone, it departed, because of the departure of Christs loving favour: For as the heart is said to goe forth when men are astonished with feare, so the soule is said to goe away, when men are furcharged with griefe and sorrow. Whence it is evident, that the Church was almost dead for her folly and negligence, whereby she had caused her Christ to withdraw himselfe.

And surely if negligent and regardlesse entertainments of  
O 2                      God,



God, or Christ, or his Word, (which cause the cessation of favour) are thus abundantly bewayled with bowels and faintings, how much more should the bowels be doubled, and the measures of griefe and repentance be swelled, when the suspension of Gods love and favour is caused by our injurious handling of his blessed Spirit, by fighting against his motions, and presuming against the directing and convincing light, to dishonour and grieve him with the most foule iniquities.

Yet if we can humbly and throughly bemoane our losse, and repent of our sins, we shall behold the Lord in mercy and love againe. *David* could not but yeeld out the countenance of his favour to *Absolom*, though an untoward sonne: If the clouds did break, the sunne would shine againe; for  
God

God will not onely give, but restore comforts to his mourners.

2. Revive thy uprightnesse, and then God will renew his favour. *A good man* (saith Solomon, Prov. 12. 2.) *obtaineth favour of the Lord* : (i.) An upright man, a man whose heart is single, (for he is opposed to the man of many devices) whose heart is single and plain with God in his walkings, such a man shall obtaine favour from the Lord.

David assures us of it, Ps. 5. 12 *Thou Lord wilt blesse the righteous, and with favour wilt thou compasse him as with a shield.* It was a good speech of Davids, Psal. 36. 9. *With thee is the fountaine of life, and in thy light shall we see light.* q. d. Lord, thou hast comfort and favour enough, thy favour indeed is life, the very fountaine of it, and in the light of thy paths  
O 3 shall



shall the sons of men see the light of thy favour.

*Psal. 17.15  
I will be-  
hold thy  
face in up-  
rightness.*

**Note.**

For, brethren, we cannot see light by darknesse, light must be seene by light; and whatsoever is contrary to light, is an impediment of seeing. Gods favour cannot be seene by any thing which is contrary to Gods nature. Crooked hearts and crooked wayes, an heart and an heart, a tongue and a tongue, a life and a life, (*i.*) a doubling heart, and a doubling tongue, and a doubled conversation, which hath a veine of sinfulness and approbation, this the Lord hates and abhors; for God is ever single in all his dealings with men: They shall have mercy, or they shall not have it: and so he exceedingly delights in the simplicity of Christians: Let them deale ingenuously with him, give him all the might they have, and him

him onely, though they have not a preient sight, yet they have a sure promise of his favour.

The Lord will meet them, *Esa. 64. 5. Thou meetest him that rejoyceth and worketh righteousnesse, those that remember thee in thy wayes.* Walk thou towards God in uprightnesse, and God will walk towards thee in comfortablenesse. Be thou a son, and he will be a Father. Give him thy heart, and hee will shew to thee his face.

Therefore let us cast about not onely for our generall, but also for the services of our particular callings and relations, in which if the Lord sees us upright in walking, wee shall assuredly find him to be gracious in distributing the beams of his favour unto our soules.

3. Earnestly seeke Gods favour.



1. Seek it by enquiries in the ordinances of his favour. *Saw ye him whom my soule loveth?* said the Church in her losse, *Cant. 3. 3.* unto the watchmen. And as *Mary, Joh. 20. 13.* weeping, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him:* And *ver. 15.* *Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* What came of this? See *ver. 16.* *Jesus saith unto her, Mary;* It was one onely word, but enough to make her turne her selfe, and say, *Rabboni.* So may it, and so doth it oft times fall out with us in our seekings of Gods favour, The Lord doth meet us & shew himself with his loving countenance, in his Ordinances: For these Ordinances of God, they are the Exchange, the heavenly Exchange twixt God and his people, wherein they present unto him their duty,

duty, and he confers on them his grace and favour; So that they who have come hither with sighs, *O that God would be my God!* have returned with Psalms of joy, *The Lord is my God and my Father, I will praise thee, O Lord my God.*

2. Seek it by prayers. How abundant is David in this kind? *Psal. 106. 4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people, O visit me with thy salvation, 5. That I may see the good of thy chosen. So Psal. 31. 16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. So Psal. 4. 6. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us: For God hath promised his favour, and therefore his people may seek his favour. Nay he hath commanded his people to seek his favour, and therefore they should seek it. See Psal. 27. 8. Thou saidst, Seeke ye my face, My heart said unto me,*  
O s                      Thy



*Thy face (Lord) will I seeke.* It is an unadvised folly in the suspension of Gods favour, to unsonne our selves, and unpeople our selves, (*i.*) to deny that grace and spirituall relation twixt us and God. This is not the way to gaine favour; for when we have undone our relations of children, we exclude our selves from the expectations of favour; No, the wisest and surest way is to seek the renewing of Gods loving countenance, and say as David, *Lord, thou hast hid thy face, and I am troubled,* yet thou biddest me to seek thy face, and *Thy face (Lord) will I seeke:* Nay I doe seeke it, for *Thy favour is life,* nay, *Thy favour is better then life,* so I esteeme it, so I acknowledge it, and as my life, as that which is a life unto my life doe I earnestly desire it: Therefore, Lord, *Make thy face to shine, and behold mee againe,*

again, as thou beholdest thy people with thy ancient favour: O visit me with thy salvation, and let me see the good of thy countenance.

Now here take in two helpful advices more: viz.

1. When you seek the light of Gods countenance, doe not blind your eyes: Remember still, that a man who will shut his eye, shall hardly find: Now nothing can see Gods favour but the eye of faith, for in Christ Jesus onely we see and discern him our gracious God and Father; Therefore keep open that eye. The direct workings of faith can alwayes see God, and the reflexive will at length see God to be my God. When thou comest unto him thus, Lord, I doe need, I doe prize, I doe desire thy favour and countenance, and thou hast promised it, but thou wilt not keep thy promise, thou

Two things to be remembered in our seeking of Gods favour.



*Simile.*

thou wilt never shew the light of thy countenance to my soul more ; now though wee seek much, no marvaile we find not the heavens to open; You must use the key, as well as the hands, if you will come in and see the roomes : Our hands of Prayer must use the key of Faith, if we would open the countenance of God towards us ; for faith is that which gives us our sights of God and Christ.

2. Judge not of the issue by what thou feelest, but by what God promiseth : And in case therefore that God doth not shew thee his ancient love presently or easily, yet knock againe, and provoke thy heart to out-beleeve all reasonings of feare and corruption.

As David, Psal 42. 11. *Why art thou cast downe, O my soule ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God, for I shall*

shall yet praise him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

O my God, saith he in ver. 6. of that Psalme, *my soule is cast downe within me*, (no question but for the absence of Gods favour, ver. 7. *My rocke, Why hast thou forgotten me?*) therefore (saith he) *will I remember thee*. Remember him, O David? What encouragements so to doe? Thy Rock seemeth to forget thee, and all his waves and billowes are gone over thee, thou art in a tossed, and forgotten condition, and yet thou sayest, *I will remember thee*. Now see ver. 8. *Yet the Lord will command his loving kindnesse in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life*.

q. d. It is true, these afflictions and sorrows are upon me, and God seems to forget me  
for



for present, yet I will remember him, I know he thinks on me, he hath loving kindnesse, and he will command it, he can shew it when he pleaseth, I shall assuredly have it, perhaps in the day time, perhaps in the night time, and therefore day and night will I seek him for his loving kindnesse, I will remember him.

*Ob.*

How to  
support  
our selves  
in the in-  
terim.

But how may one support himselfe in the interims of this suspension of divine favour? Can one be good, who is thus? Or will God doe good, or doth hee thinke any good of such a one?

*Sol.*

I answer, you may support your selves thus:

1. By remembering the dayes of old. *Psa. 77. 7. Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? 9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious? This is mine infirmity. 9. d. For me thus to conclude that God will*

will not be favourable and gracious unto me, because I feele him not so, this is my weaknesse, and sinfull error: But how then will you support your ielfe? See *ver. 10. I will remember the yeeres of the right hand of the most High, 11. I will remember thy wonders of old.* And assuredly the remembrance of what God hath done, is able to support us with a confident expectation of what God will yet doe for us.

If we remember the dayes of old, the method of Gods former proceedings and behaviours towards us, we shall acknowledge, and so comfort our selves, that when he withdrew, it was an withdrawment either of necessity, or expediency, and his loving countenance hath risen again without a cloud, after a night of sorrow, after a day of seeking.

For

I had his  
favour  
once, and  
am in it  
still, and  
shall have  
it againe.



For the suspensions of his favour are temporary, though his truths be eternall. *I will come againe*, saith Christ: And, *It was but a little* (saide the Church, Cant. 3.4.) *that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soule loveth.*

2. Thou art in favour, though thou feelest none; And though thy comfort be in the feeling of it, yet thy happiness is in the being of it: Thou art saved because God loves, not because thou perceivest that love.

2 Tim. 2. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth who are his.* He knoweth them in respect of the freeness of his election, and in respect of the immobility of his affection; He knowes them still, but they know not him still. *Is Ephraim my deare sonne?* Jer. 31. 10. *g.d.* He is so, but he thinks I think not so.

Some-

Sometimes the walking child holds the parent, and sometimes the parent holds the child; there is safety in both respects; for whiles either I hold, or am held, I am safe: So is it with us and God, sometimes we lay hold on him by faith, sometimes (nay all times) he layes hold on us by his love; our salvation is in this, that we are Gods, and God is ours; that he hath our hearts, and we his love, though alwayes we see it not.

3. Thou shalt have favour, though now it be drawn up: He will behold thy upright heart, and thou shalt see his face with joy. *Esay 54.8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindnesse will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.*

Therefore the Church elegantly, *Micah 7.8. Rejoyce not against*



against me, O mine enemy ; when I fall, I shall arise ; when I sit in darknesse, the Lord shall be a light unto me. 9. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Remember this one thing, Upright and beleeving persons have alwayes a favourable God, though they have not alwayes the sense of Gods favour : yea though Satan doe testifie the contrary, which is the next spring of doubtings, and comes in now fitly to be handled.

12. A twelfth spring of doubtings, was, the crediting of Satans testimony about our spirituall condition, and interests in God and Christ ; to which if any distressed Christian doth hearken and attend, he shal never be freed from inquietations and rowlings of mind, because Satans testimony is ever directly or obliquely

ly against the truth and comfort of our spirituall estate.

For the remedy and cure of which spring, be pleased seriously to consider of these subsequent conclusions.

1. The finall tryall of our eternall estate doth immediately and solely appertaine to the Court of heaven. Indeed the disquisitive part belongs to us, but the decisive part belongs to God: We ought to search and prove our selves, but no man hath immediate power to decide his estate, by acquitting or condemning himselfe. This must be done by the voice of God in his revealed Word, which commands and forbids, and therefore absolves or binds.

No subject you know hath this power, to release or bind of himselfe, but that is the royall prerogative of the King. It is true, if the Word  
con-

A twofold  
tryall of a  
mans  
estate.



condemnes us, then our consciences may doe so too; and if the Word absolves us, so may our consciences too: But this is *virtute prima*, not *virtute propria*; It is because the Word doth it, not because Conscience of it selfe without the Word can doe either rightly.

Whence two things arise to informe and direct us: *viz.*

Satans  
judging is  
but usurped.

1. Satans judgment of our estate is but usurped: It doth not belong to him to sit upon our soules: It is against the Law of Nations, that the same party should be witnesse and Judge: And we may say to him truly, what the Pharisees proudly objected to Christ, *By what authority doth he these things?* Or as they to Moses, *Who made thee a Judge over us?* Assuredly the enemy of our salvation is not to be the Judge of it, he being so maliciously vowed

vowed against our happinesse; it is most unfit for him to decide it: and therefore though he usurps a judgement upon Christians, yet as *David* spake in another case, *Thou Lord wilt not leave the righteous when he is judged*; No assuredly, Satan shall one day be judged for taking upon him the judging of Gods people: And doe you thinke that Satan will give a true judgement unto us of our spirituall condition, who dares give in false evidence before God himselfe of *Job*, and who is said to accuse the brethren before God day and night?

2. No testimony is to be admitted, which is contrary to the judgment of the Word: *Beleeve not every spirit, 1 Job. 4. 1. but try the spirits, whether they are of God.* The Word must judge us another day, & therefore it is to judge of us now.

Satans

All judgement of our states, being contrary to the Word, is false.



Satans judgement is usurped, and our owne is oft times erroneous, as in wicked and presumptuous sinners, who sentence well for their safety, although God doth proclaime and pronounce bitter woes unto them.

And as our judgements are oft times erroneous, so are they in the times of distresse, suspicious and hasty: We doe not testifie of our selves with judgements cleared, and totally informed by the Word, of all our estate, but with judgements affected and distempered; as *David* in his fit, *I am cast out of thy presence*; God did not cast him off, but his distempered judgement did cast him out.

2. Maintain the judgment of the Word, against all judgement: When a man hath thoroughly viewed and pierced into the secrets of his heart and

and wayes by the informing light of Gods blessed Spirit, and takes his flesh and spirit asunder, I meane his finnes, weakneses, graces and dispositions, and layes these, with all he knows of himselfe, before the Lord in a most sincere ingenuity, so that if he were now to die, he durst venture the eternall salvation of his soule, with his God, that hee keeps nothing back, either of what is his owne by nature, or of what is Gods by grace: If now the Word decides for him, that his condition is heavenly, his heart is upright, hee is indeed one who is truly interested in Christ; this man or woman should now uphold this decisive testimony of the Word, lay it up as the great copy of his eternall salvation; and in case of opposite verdict and testimony, not to molest himselfe with reasoning and doub-



doubting, but to preserve the authority of Gods testimony, by beleiving, and most upright walking with God in all the powers of duty.

There yet remaine two springs of doubtings to be cured, and then I have done with that subject.

13. The thirteenth spring of doubtings, was, the new rising of old sinnes: This I told you could not but amaze the soule, to see the dead rise out of the grave againe, and to read the debt as if it were not yet crossed: It doth exceedingly disquiet us about our spirituall condition. Now consider,

Five times  
in which  
former sins  
may revive

1. There are five times when we and our sinnes doe meet.

1. One is the day of our legall humiliation, when the Law, like searching physick, enters deep, stirs up the evill humour,

humour, casts our sins into our very faces, and sets them in order before us, and reproves us for them with undeniable conviction and horreur.

2. Another is, the day of our piercing afflictions, when the Lord doth send his messengers unto us of wrath, cuts off frō us our delights, tears away our joyes, crosseth us in our aims, and we see God hewing our friends from us, our children from us, our earthly delights and contents: for miserable evils are oft times a cause to make us see our sinfull evils: We doe many times come to perceive our faults, by our punishments: As *Pharaoh* did, when the plagues were on him, *I have done evill in not letting the people goe*: And *Balaam*, when he saw the Angel, and heard him threatning, *I will now returne*: And so the children of Israel, then saw, and

P                      confest



confest their murmuring and stubbornnesse, when God sent evil Angels amongst them, (i.) some messengers of his wrath and displeasure.

3. A third is, the time of some horrible and common judgement, whether it be upon particular persons, or a Nation, interested in the same guilt of sinne with our selves; For this is a time of common fire, which raging and flying up and downe, makes men run into their closets, and bring out their concealed jewels; so doe common and extraordinary judgments return us into our selves, and gives up unto us those our hidden sins which we feare will draw the same fire of judicall wrath upon our owne persons. I doe not doubt but at the last great Plague, many of the sinfull botches broke out, upon a fear lest that judicall botch should have

have broken in upon your bodies and houses.

4. A fourth time is, the time of death: For though sin and a sinner really meet in all their course of life, yet sense of sin and a sinner doe not alwayes meet untill the day of death; for death is a strict and unavoidable summons to give up our accounts, and then the unjust steward must look about him, how he shall answer his most just Lord and Master.

This time of meeting, evidently manifests it selfe to our owne experience; who though we have kindled our sinnes in the time of our health and strength, yet have we not met with the flashes of them but in the times of sicknesse and weaknesse.

5. A last time of meeting is, the day of Judgement; and this is a most certaine and in-



fallible time; It is possible for a man to escape the legall meeting, by conviction; and the miserable meeting, by afflictions, judgements, and death it selfe; (for some die like *Nabal*, they live wretchedly, and die senselessly) but at the day of Judgement, they and their sinnes must meet, and shall; because then the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and Gods righteous judgement shall be evident to the hearts of all the world. Whence it is, that in this day of meeting, *they shall cry unto the mountaines to fall on them, and the rocks to hide them (but in vaine) from the wrath of him who sits upon the throne.*

Divers  
causes of  
sins rising  
afresh.

2. There are severall causes of the rising of sin: Some are on Gods part, some on our part, some on Satans.

1. For Gods part: God doth many times cause our  
former

former sins to rise, by the power of his mighty spirit in the ministry of his Word: For whereas the sinner would hush his fears, and griefs, and conscience asleep, yet the Lord will not have it so: He doth rub the sore, and gall the conscience, makes it sensible of the guilt and wounds; Hee doth pierce by the two-edged sword of his Word, even to the dividing asunder of soule and spirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and discernes the very thoughts and intents of the heart. He meets the person oft times many years after the commission of the finnes, and most expresly revives and remembers them in all the acting circumstances, which the sinning person either had, or would have buried in silence and forgetfulnesse.

2. For our part: Thus there is double cause of new rising of



old sins: One whereof is good, and the other is bad.

1. A new commission of the old sins, which brings back upon us the sting of the old guilt; for relapses into the disease, occasion a relapse of the burden and ache: Cut thy finger againe, and it will smart againe; fall into thy ague againe, it will make thee shake againe: Relapses have ever this judgement with them, that they make a fresh wound, and the old also to bleed againe. You know in some Wells, there are two buckets, put downe the one, and you bring up the other; so the falling into the same sin againe, brings up the old burden againe.

Though we may not revive sinne to practise it, yet we may to mourn for it.

2. Renewed humiliations; for then we doe voluntarily look back upon our former accounts, that thereby we may more humbly sue out a totall dis-

discharge. Though wee may sin the sin over no more, yet we may weep it over and over; and though the acting of it may be no more, yet the bewailing of it should last us ever.

3. On Satans part, who like an envious and malicious wretch never gives over to throw unto us our errors and failings, though corrected with truest reformation. So Satan, who is the great cause and incentive to sin, will not cease after our truest repentance, to vex, and sad, and (if he could, to) despaire our hearts with the fresh memory of former and forsaken sins; so that we seldome or never lay hand on a blessed promise, or gaine our selves into the comfortable favour of God, or delight our selves in the sweet peace of conscience, but he falls in, and checks, and troubles us with

P 4 the



the representations of former sins, and perchance makes us let goe our gracious hold, with the feares, and suspitions, and chargements of former guilts.

3. Now according to the variety of the causes, fetching up upon us our former guilts, must we deliver unto you severall helps and remedies.

The ends  
of reviving  
of sin.

Consider therefore, on Gods part, there are severall ends in respect of severall persons, why he brings on the sinnes againe.

1. To make the groundwork more deep and sure: We make our tents too short for our wounds; Wee sinne much, and defile our selves much, and we think that a little washing will serve the turne. O! this businesse of self-tryall, of laying the axe to the root of the tree, of diving into the secrets of sin, of applying the

the corrasives unto the core & heart of our natures, this goes against us, wee are quickly weary of it.

Indeed, some trouble, and some bitternesse we grant to be convenient; but to be still accusing our selves before God, still to be lashing and wounding our hearts for wounding of God, Ah, this, this goes against us.

You shall see people sometimes very sensible of their diseased bodies: O now some physick were good, they find such aches, such distempers, surely some physick were good; and some they take, which makes them excessively sick; but then away with it, no more physick: yet at length the disease comes upon them againe, and the Physitian prescribes more physick, even that which must goe to the root of the disease, which



though it makes them more sick, yet it procures their safety, and better health.

Beloved, God would have men (perhaps) a longer space to sit upon their sinnes; they stint themselves after great sins, and make themselves friends with God presently. Now the Lord knowes that this skinning of the sore will spoile all, and therefore after a short time he returnes them their sins againe, makes Conscience to startle at the guilt againe, and deales with us as the skilfull Chirurgion with a man whose leg is broken, and ill set, he breaks it againe, that it may be well set.

So doth the Lord, he breaks our soules againe with the guilt of sins; He will make us know, that wee must bring him more broken hearts; we shall know what it is to sinne against him, and shall not make

make a reall and lasting peace without a sound and solid humiliation.

And truly this is the great mercy of his wisdome to work thus; for hereby he makes our foundation low, and sure, and hereby he prevents subsequent stirs, and makes way for our surer and more comfortable apprehensions and applications of his love in Christ. You know that a wise School-master, when a boy skips from a hard lesson to that which is more easie, he puts him back againe, and makes him say it over and over, ere he takes it forth. Men think to be catching at Christ, however they love to lay load on him, and throw their vile burdens upon him, though perhaps they never yet weighed their vile sinings and dishonourings of God: But the Lord will turne them back againe, he will take  
off



off these pragmaticall presumers, and set them to learne their first lesson better: He will make them more sensible of their vile hearts, and waies, and actions; they shall not so easily come off from their accursed transgressions; the Lord will hold up the comfortable answers of his favours, and the sweet tastes of the Lord Jesus Christ, and make them againe to sit downe in bitter sorrow for piercing the Lord Christ, and shedding his blood, and grieving of his Spirit, and all that men might be more humbled, and more really fitted for Christ.

2. To make us more humble. I assure you oft times our very victories make us proud, and that very grace which should be a cause to abase us, occasionally and accidentally is a means to puffe us: we rise too often above our selves,

selves, beyond measure : And therefore as to *Paul* there was given a sting to abase him, lest he should be over-exalted ; so to many Christians the Lord doth returne unto them the sensible sting of some notable guilt, to abase their hearts, to put them in mind of themselves.

For this reduction of former guilt, it gives up unto us our base and treacherous natures, and the births of our owne hearts : Ah ! saith such a person, this heart, this nature of mine, what was it ? what is it, if the Lord leaves it ? See here the grapes, the sowre grapes of this wild-vine, little reason have I to be so highly conceited of my self, as long as I perceive such loathsome accounts and issues from my selfe.

And verily, it makes us oft-times to despise our selves, to abhorre our selves in dust and ashes :

And that we might bestow our tears & not our tongues on others sinning.



Our present  
graces make us  
good, and  
the sense  
of former  
sins keeps  
us humble

ashes: And this is one great end and use which the Lord makes of former sins, To keep the heart in a very humble frame: We must have something or other still put unto us of our owne, which will let us see how foolish we are by nature, that is *Dauids* phrase, and how brutish we were, that is *Solomons* phrase.

3. To make us more careful: For the sharp remembrance of sinne doth in a godly heart work stronger detestation, and stronger watchfulness: God doth make their new considerations to be our present preventions: Future commissions of sinne are many times prevented by new impressions of former sins.

What? should I sinne thus again? saith the humble heart: have I not reason to crush these births? to crucifie that bitter root, to pray against it,

Remem-  
bring the  
gall & the  
worm-  
wood,  
*Lam. 3.*

to watch against it, to resist it, to deny it, which hath beene and is now a sword in my conscience?

But now consider that there is a double carefulnesse wrought by the new rising of sinne.

1. One respects the guilt of it; and here our care is to get our acquittance renewed and enlarged. O how doth the Lord by these risings of sin, soone cause the soule to rise up in suing out his grace and favour! It causeth many a teare, many a prayer, many a wrestling with God, many pressings upon the promises, many an earnest beseeching to have our pardon and discharge more fully sealed unto our consciences, by the blood of Jesus Christ, and testimony of the Spirit.

2. Another respects the sins themselves, in their corrupt qualities, and inclinations, and motions :



motions ; and this is a greater study against them : firmer resolutions, strengthening of covenants , confirmations of grace , of circumspection , of detestation, of resistance, of any thing or way by which the powers of sin may be more subdued and cast downe.

4. To make us more thankful : Perhaps the Lord hath pardoned those sins which rise anew in thy heart ; they doe not alwayes rise, because God hath not discharged their guilt , but because thou hast not discharged thy new debt ; they arise as a debt, for the discharge of a debt : as we use to put men in mind of their former miseries , not that thereby they are made miserable, but because thereby they should be made thankful. Beloved, to have former sins discharged, it is mercy, I say mercy, yea and a rich mercy,

cy, greater then to give a condemned person life, or to give an imprisoned person liberty, far greater : No such mercy as that which blots out our sins, which saves a soule from hell, and gives it pardon and life. Now great mercies should be answered with great thankfulnessse : Thou didst, in the sense and sting of thy guilt, go with an heavy heart, with bitter sighes, with deep oppressions, O that I had mercy ! O this burden ! O this wound ! O this sinne ! Yea and with deep protestations, If the Lord will but pardon it, If he will shew me mercy, If he would receive me graciously, he should have the calves of my lips, I would love him indeed, I would serve him, I would praise and thank him, I would speak good of his name, I would say, *Who is a God like him, that forgiveth iniquities, transgressions and sins;*



*sins, and passeth by the sins of his people?*

Well, the Lord hath shewed himselfe like himselfe, a God very gracious and mercifull; but we perhaps have shewed our selves like our selves, in distresses, earnest, and full of promises; but in our exemptions, flat, and full of forgetfulnesse. Now the Lord doth exceedingly dislike this vanity and doubting of heart; he loves that mercy should be still acknowledged to be mercy? he would have us to look back, as well as to look up; and to give him thanks for that mercy, for which not long since wee would have given all the world and our soules too: And therefore doth he cast unto us our accounts, he lets us thereby see what they were, and what he hath done, that wee may confesse our error for not answering great mercy with great

great thankfulnesse.

But perhaps you will inquire, What if we our selves for our part be the cause of reviving of former guilt and sting of former sins?

*Ob.*

I answer, If it be by way of humiliation, to seek the pardon, and to make confession to the God of mercy, and to get victory over them, this should no way discourage us; for this is no more hurt or prejudice to the soule, then the after laying open of the wound to the Chirurgion to dresse and cure it, is prejudiciall to the safety and welfare of the body.

*Sol.*

But if it be by way of commission, either by relapsing into the same sins, or multiplying of sinne in another kinde, (both which will dig up again our buried and fore-past guilts) then I know no way of peace and safety, no way to allay these renewed accusations  
and



and stings, but by renewed sorrow and repentance. And verily what I delivered unto you heretofore about recovery from relapsing, that is the course presently to be taken here: O let us haste in before the Lord with hearts trickling down with tears of blood, for old and present wounds: the very abundance of sorrow, the bitterness of griefe, the art of self-affliction, I cannot say that sorrow of sorrow, that hatred of hatred, that indignation of indignation, that revenge of revenge, that repentance of repentance, which are here necessarily required, and that too with longest continuance. Doe what thou wilt, shuffle off, cut to thy selfe a peace, thou shalt never have it, thy sinnes shall ever and anon gall, and vex, and wound thee, untill thou hast renewed thy bitterness of most humbled sorrow for  
re-

renewing thy filthinesse and  
basenesse of thy audacious sin-  
ning.

But then suppose, that Satan  
through his malicious art doth  
revive our former guilt by his  
accusations, for our greater in-  
terruption and disquietment;  
what is now to be done?

*Ob.*

I will shew you here briefly  
two things:

*Sol.*

1. One is, how you may  
know that the reviving of for-  
mer guilt be from Satan or  
no.

2. Another is, what is then  
to be done by us.

1. You may know that  
your sins are revived by Sa-  
tan, from two effects.

1. One is from the despe-  
rate issues of their reviving:  
you may know whether a man  
be a friend, or a malicious ene-  
my, who doth revive the er-  
rors and failings amongst  
men; a friend, hee revives  
them

How to  
know  
whether  
Satan re-  
vives for-  
mer sins.



them that you may be bettered either to reforme, if the thing be evill, or to be circumspect whether the thing be true or false; but the malicious enemy he revives them, onely to make you odious and loathsome. Now Satans reviving of former sins is ever odious, it is of evill, for evill, his end is desperate: What is that? That is, that we might give up all possible interrests in mercy, all hope of pardon and acceptance. Whence it is, where he revives sins, former sins, hee bends the heart to some present mischiefe, to renounce all hope of mercy, and to self-murder, and such desperate issues; both which are against the ends of God, and the desires of an holy heart; which upon their reviving of sinne, doe ever propose mercy and betterment unto the soule.

2. Another is from the filthy

thy issues, which is this: Hee revives the sting of sinne, that he may make us more bold and mad in sinning: He revives sin unto sin, there is no hope of mercy, of recovery, therefore as good to goe on as not: Whence he inclines the heart to a leaping into the water, to a wallowing in the mire, to a greedinesse in the course of sinning; which hee doth the more easily win from the evill hearts of evill men, by those temporary allayments and cessations of stinging guilt, which they observe in themselves, by their furiousnesse, constant, and hardning revolutions or exercise of the same sins.

So that, if you whose hearts are tender, have been humbled for former sins, and are so upright as still to hate them, if former guilts be revived with an inclination either to give



give up all mercy, or to give over your selves now with licentiousnesse to the same or other sins; here is Satan in this, Satan now revives thy guilt, and now another course is to be taken.

2. The course then is this, and I beseech you mark it;

1. Strengthen thy heart with more detestations of the sins: The more he revives the guilty accusation, the more doe thou revive thy upright detestations: And as he poures out malice to disturb thy conscience, so doe thou poure out revenge to subdue the grounds of it: And if he vexeth thee, doe thou goe and vexe thy sinnes.

Thy case  
is not wic-  
ked, be-  
cause a  
wicked  
devill  
saith so.

2. Beleeve not a malicious accuser: Satan doth oft times serve a Writ in the Kings name, without the Kings seale; he forgives where God doth not, and he binds where God hath

hath released : And this know,  
*It is God that justifieth, who then  
 shall condemne?* If the King him-  
 selfe hath pardoned thee, how  
 unjust is it for the under-offi-  
 cer to arrest and challenge ?

3. But in case of frequent  
 inquietations, when Satan will  
 not be answered, but still char-  
 geth, now make thine appeale  
 from him to God ; and if he  
 charge thee in the Court of  
 Conscience , remove it wisely  
 to the higher court of heaven;  
 let God once more have the  
 hearing, and the deciding.  
 And now Satan, what hast  
 thou to say unto me? Thou  
 hast sinned heretofore, (saith  
 Satan ) and thy Judge doth  
 know the truth of this indict-  
 ment. I have (Satan) I confesse  
 it, and my God doth know the  
 truth of my sorrow and repen-  
 tance. Lord, dost thou not  
 know my teares , my retur-  
 nings, my judgings of my self,

Q my

The Chri-  
 stian must  
 appeale.



my feeling of mercy & grace? Lord thou hast knowne it, and hast knowne my soule with thy pardoning and accepting mercy.

4. Rest the soule and fasten it unto the bloud of Christ, which will alwayes cry downe the testimonies and clamours of guilt; Nothing but that wil satisfie God, and vanquish Satan; and then by faith, not onely lay hand on mercy, but hold out the stability of mercy. The Kings pardon will serve twenty years hence in case of suit. Satan may often trouble & question, but Gods accepting of thee into mercy, will (I am sure, it may) quiet and uphold thee.

14. The last spring of doubtings, was, silence in the conscience, long silence there.

For the closing of this spring, and with it, this subject of doubtings, observe these  
these

these particulars in a word.

1. The speech of conscience, what that is.

2. The speechlesnesse of conscience, what and how.

3. To make conscience speak againe, what required.

4. To support our selves in the times of its silence, what can and may.

1. The speech of conscience: This is no more then its testimony for us, or against us; for conscience is intimate with our secret frames, and intentions, and motives, and actions: By its naturall light it can tell much, by implanted light more, by renewed and sanctified light, most of all. Now the speech of conscience for us, is nothing else but an approbation of our estate, answerable to the Word, acquiting us against all feares and objections that we are the sons of God, that we are truly changed, that we sincerely

The speech  
of consci-  
ence, what



cerely love him , beleeve in Christ, and walk before him; for really the voice of Conscience is but the eccho of the voice of the Word, and saith that unto us touching our particular, what the Word delivers in the generall. Its voice is but the Assumption, and the voice of the Word is but the Proposition : The Word saith, that should be ; and Conscience saith , here it is : The Word requires such and such things in a man to be saved, and who is in favour with God, and Conscience brings them out, and answers for the person.

The  
speechles-  
nesse of  
conscience  
what it is.

2. The speechlesnesse, or silence of conscience, is the suspension of its determining and acquiting acts touching our estate in generall, or touching some particular doubts: Sometimes conscience calls upon us, and sometimes we call upon con-

conscience. In matters of direction to practise or forbearance, we usually heare a reall and inward word, Do it not, or, Thou mayst do it: In after doubts we call upon conscience for its testimony, In the uprightnesse of my heart did I it, and my conscience doth beare me witnesse.

Now of all the silences of conscience, that is heaviest which befalls us in our spirituall combats and tryals; wherein our gracious condition is questioned, but cannot be issued, because conscience holds up, and doth not testifie for us by any sensible approbation and acquittance, which is caused diversly.

1. Sometimes through particular mis-behaviours against the directing voice of conscience, these hold in the acquitting voice of conscience, for conscience will not speak for

Silence in conscience diversly caused.



us, if we presume to sinne against it.

2. Sometimes through disregard to the voice of God in the Ministry; for Conscience takes not that well, which the Word takes ill: and therefore God doth usually make us know our neglects of his Word, by the silences of our consciences: And assuredly something is ordinarily amiss, when Conscience speaks unto us neither good nor bad.

3. Sometimes Conscience is silent, to make us look higher then Conscience, and that wee might know there is a higher Court to which wee must make our addresses.

4. Sometimes Conscience is silent, to make us see upon what bottomes our faith is grounded, whether we can beleeve, because God saith, as well as rejoyce, because Conscience speaketh.

2. But

3. But to make Conscience speak, what must we doe? We have had its gracious testimonies, by which we have been much comforted and supported: How shall we recover it to speech againe?

I answer,

1. Speak to God, and then God may speak to Conscience, and Conscience will speak to thee. God hath a greater command over Conscience, then it hath over us: It is with God and Conscience, as with a King and his Courtiers, let the King speake kindly to a Petitioner, the Courtiers will then imbrace him lovingly: and indeed Conscience will carry Gods face, and expresse his dispositions of love: Therefore this doe, speak to the Lord, 1. To shew thee the cause of Consciences silence. 2. To give thee the testimony of his owne

The waies  
to recover  
conscience  
to speech  
again.



Spirit, which will draw with it againe the testimony of thine owne conscience, *Rom. 8. 16.*

2. Speak to duty : Be sure thou doe not displease Conscience : If thou hast, repent, and adde no more to make Conscience displeased, or silent.

4. But how may we support our selves in the times of silence ?

I answer, thou mayst comfort thy selfe, if

1. The Word can approve thee : the testimony of the Word is ever open, though that of Conscience be not : What is the reason ? Because men may have a constant audience and tryall of their estates. And take one thing by the way, If the Word (which is alwayes open and speaking) if it acquits thee, Conscience (though now silent, whensoever it speakes) will cleare thee.

2. Thou

2. Thou hast and dost approve the Word : How is that? That is, If the Word be thy rule, thy light, by which thou hast and dost walk : for when Conscience comes to speak, it gives its sentence from the Word, (by which thou walkest ) and of thy frame and course which thou preservest in an upright answerablenesse to the directions of the Word.

Q 5

An



An Addition of foure  
other causes of Doub-  
tings, with a brieft re-  
solution of them.

1. **S**ense of sinfull workings.  
SO! saith a distressed soul,  
Certainly my condition is  
stark naught, and I have no  
right to Christ, nor to any  
mercy, I may not beleeve:  
Why? Because I never found  
such vile workings of heart as  
of late: I feele a wonderfull  
rebellion in my heart; I can-  
not think on any good, nor set  
upon any good, but an army  
of evill is in me, opposing and  
hindering me.

*Sol.*

To a soule in such a condi-  
tion, I would (for his help)  
prescribe these five subsequent  
considerations.

1. When grace comes in  
truth, it is ever of that power  
to

to make such discoveries, and to raise such stirs, as the soule never felt before; for Grace is a new nature, and a new light, and a new active principle. It is put into the soul for that very end, to find and lay out sin, yea and to expell and thrust it out. The judgement was never so convinced before, nor Conscience so qualified before, nor the will and affections so spiritualized before: therefore never marvell at the strange workings. When a child is conceived in the wombe, it is not now with the woman as in former times; and whensoever Christ is formed in the soule, it is not with that soule as in old times. There is that now false in, which must purge thee and rule thee.

2. If good be wrought, evil will work and oppose it. When Christ was born, all Jerusalem was



was troubled ; so when grace is wrought, sin will stir. Indeed if grace came into the soule either by a finall and totall cessation of sin, that there were no sin residing in the soule, into the which grace comes, then thou shouldst feele no stir at all : Thus it shall be in heaven ; Grace there shall be alone ; Holinesse, and nothing but holinesse there, and therefore no combat, no stir : But thus it never will be on earth : Sinne may be alone in some mens hearts, but grace is never alone in any mans heart in this life. Or if grace came into the soule by a peaceable resignati- on, if sinfull flesh would without any more adoe make a full and free surrender, and give it possession without any dispute and cavill, then also thou mightst expect a calmnesse, and a cessation of armes, no vile stirrings. But O Christian,

stian, Grace and sin, *The Spirit and the flesh are contrary one to the other*, and therefore they lust one against the other. Fire and water will not lie quiet. Sad indeed were thy condition, if thou hadst such a frame of (vaine) good, against which no sinfull part in thee would oppose.

Gal. 5. 17.

Every regenerate man hath a double man in him, the new man, and the old man; that would doe good, this would not doe good; that would pray, this would not; that would mourn, this would not; that would beleeve, this would not.

3. But then thirdly, thou who feelest such a rebelling and opposing flesh in thee, what is that which thou dost oppose? It is true, thou feelest an untoward, rebellious nature yet within thee, but what side takest thou? *It is not I*, said Paul,

Rom. 7.



*Paul, but sin that dwelleth in me. Sin in him opposed good, but Paul himselfe approved good, and delighted in good, and willed good.*

Gal 5. 17.

ver. 18.

The same Apostle speaking of the co-habitation, and the co-operation of flesh and spirit in regenerate persons, that the one did *lust* against the other, and the one was *contrary* to the other, and that by reason of the rebellion and unrulinesse of the one, *we could not doe the good which we would*; he yet comforteth them in such a condition in the next words, *If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law*. As if he had said, Notwithstanding all this rebellious opposition of your flesh, if yet ye yeeld not to be servants to it, but approve of, and incline unto, and follow in your hearts & courses the rules of the Spirit, the condition is very good & safe.

So

So that though the evill remaining in us doth oppose the good in us, yet if we our selves oppose not the good, our condition may be good.

4. Fourthly, as there is evill in thee opposing of thee in any good, so there is something in thee also opposing of that evil. Dost thou not condemne that hardnesse which hinders thee from mourning, and sheddest many a teare because thou canst not mourne? Dost thou not strive with the Lord by many prayers, and in the use of all his ordinances against that unbeleeving and rebelliously working nature of thine? Dost thou not with *Paul*, conflict with it ; groane under it, cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me ?*

And surely neither the sense of this, nor the resistance of this, nor second desires of deliverance from this, can be  
any



any evill signs of thy condition.

5. Lastly, in the sense of inward rebellions and workings, thy way is not to nourish doubting, but thy duty it is to stir up beleiving.

When *Paul* felt that agony twixt the law of his members and the law of his minde, indeed he was much troubled at it, but yet he did not conclude against his condition in grace; No, but he acquits that, (*Rom. 7.25. So then with the mind I my self serve the Law of God, though with the flesh the law of sinne*) and sets his faith to worke, *ver.24. Who shall deliver mee? ver.25. I thanke God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Mark his practise: This is my condition, I feele rebellious lusts, yea I feele them sometimes captivating of me, what course shall I now take to be delivered of them? to vanquish them? I  
con-

conflict with them, but I cannot conquer them: I cannot conquer them, yea but Jesus Christ can conquer them, and deliver me from them, and to him will I goe by faith.

Thus must thou doe in the sense of that native rebellion and vile operation of thy flesh: Thou must by faith goe unto Christ, thou must acknowledge thy vilenesse, and thy insufficiency, and also his sufficiency: Thou must exalt Jesus Christ by faith in his Mediatorship, and trust on him, that he will by his Almighty Spirit crucifie thy sinfull flesh more, and (which was one end of his comming into the world) destroy those works of sin and Satan.

2. Another cause of doubting in a Christian, may be the sense of wrath. O! saith such a one, would you have me to beleeve, or imagine you that I  
can



can doe so, I who feele the very wrath of God in my soule, and the terrors of the Almighty wounding me for my transgressions? What can or may I beleeeve mercy for me, who now feele wrath upon me? can I beleeeve that God will be mercifull, whom I sensibly apprehend to be wrathfull?

*Sol.*

This is a notable case, and needs a wary and circumspect resolution: Nevertheless I shall at least endeavour to ungirt this burden for a troubled soule.

1. There are two sorts of persons who in this life may feele the wrath of God.

First, such as are unquestionably wicked: of whom some of them feele the wrath of God, as the beginning of their everlasting perdition: That wrath inflicted on them is but the beginning of a just hell due unto them. Thus *Judas* felt

felt the wrath of God : And some of them fee the wrath of God as a meanes for their humiliation and conversion. Thus they in *Acts* 2.37. who were *pricked in their hearts*, and thereupon cryed out, *What shall we doe?* felt the wrath of God.

Secondly, such as are unquestionably good ; of whom some have felt Gods wrath in case of desertion, as *Heman*, *Ezra*, *Job*, and others ; and some in case of notorious corruption or sinning, as *David*, whose *bones* were *broken* for it, and *Gods face hid* from him for it, and his *moisture turned into the drought of summer*.

2. Againe, you must distinguish of those effects which appeare in persons under the sense of divine wrath, for they are twofold.

1. Some fee the wrath of God, and are either onely enraged



raged against God with blasphemies, or intraging their hearts the more to goe on in sinning against God, thinking at least by the pleasure of sinne to drowne the sense of wrath, or running into absolute despaire of Gods mercy; and therefore never attempting any course of repentance, because they give up all hope of mercy. Where there is such a sense of wrath as this, in all respects, and for ever, the condition is very fearfull.

2. Some feelee the wrath of God, and are hereupon (occasionally) induced either to the study and care of an holy reformation of their sinful hearts and wayes, or to a particular restauration of themselves from grosse sins, into which they are falne, and for which now they feelee the sore displeasures of an angry Father.

If thy condition be either of these,

these, that thou feelest wrath, and that hath driven thee to a search of thy naturall estate, and to the discovery of it, and to an humbling for it, and to all the meanes by which thou mayst be delivered as well (and rather) from thy sinfulness, as from Gods wrath; or if this wrath felt awakens thy conscience, and hath been a meanes to scourge thee out of some particular sinning, to thy former and better walkings with God, thou mayst now safely beleeve on mercy; yea though thou as yet feelest wrath, yet mayst thou beleeve mercy: And my reason is this, because now mercy is thy portion, thy condition now is right under many promises of mercy to pardon thee, for it is a truly penitentiall condition. See *Esay* 55.7. *Ezek.* 18.21,22 *Hos.* 14.1,2,4.

3. Though mercy be thy  
por-



portion, yet know thou, that the sense of wrath will not off, untill thou dost beleewe actually on that mercy. It is not mercy in the Promise which alone can remove the sense of wrath, but it must be mercy applyed by faith: for till faith works in the soule of a man, till the poore soule looks on God through the Perspective of faith, God appeares not as a mercifull, but as a wrathfull God to it.

And therefore thou being in such a condition as I have delivered, thou mayst safely venture on mercy, though thou feelest wrath, (the fore-named Saints did so) and upon beleewing thou shalt in due time feele the sense of mercy to take off the sense of wrath: Thy faith will see a reconciled God, and then thou shalt enjoy a pacified conscience.

3. A third cause of doubting

ting, may be a condemning conscience. But saith the trembling Christian, My conscience tels me of my sinnings, and of wonderfull sinfulness within me; and God is greater then my conscience, who will assuredly condemne me; O I may not beleve.

This seemes to be a knotty case, Whether a person may beleve Gods absolving of him, though Conscience in him be condemning? I will deliver my opinion thus:

1. First, you must distinguish of a condemning conscience: Conscience may either condemne,

1. A mans action, Or
2. His person.

1. A mans actions are condemned by Conscience, when Conscience being rightly inlightned and informed by the Word of God, pronounceth of them that they

*Sol.*



they are evill, and damnable ; that they are contrary to Gods holinesse and glory, and therefore are to be abhorred, and crucified, and forsaken.

2. A mans person is condemned by conscience, not onely when conscience findes sins in the person, but likewise the person in sins; (*i.*) not onely such corruptions in the heart, but also the heart approving, and loving of them, and resolved to keep them, and goe on in them.

Now observe me in two Conclusions answerable to these two Propositions :

1. If Conscience condemns thy person, I confesse thou hast no reason to beleieve mercy for thy selfe ; If thy conscience tels thee to the face of God, thou art in a foule, sinfull course, and hast been called upon by the voice of the Word, and its voice to come out

out of it, and thou dost not leave it, nay, art resolved to pursue it, and to insist on it, now God is greater then thy conscience, and will assuredly condemne thee.

2. If conscience condemns thy actions onely, then thou mayest, notwithstanding that condemnation, beleeve on mercy. My meaning is this, Though the conscience by its discerning light, represents unto thee much sinfulness in thy nature and former course, and though it doth condemne these to be vile, and most fit to be crucified, abhorred, and forsaken, this condemnation hinders not the right of beleeving: Nay, no man indeed should beleeve, unlesse his conscience doth condemne sin in him; not onely shew him his sinnes, but assure him that they are evill, and unworthy his love; nay most worthy of  
R his



his detestation and mortification.

2. Secondly, you must distinguish of times, when conscience doth condemne a man; there are two times of a Christian.

1. Some are open and free; He is himselfe, and besides that, he heares both parties, as well what is for himselfe, as what is against himselfe; yea and weighs matters in controversie in the right ballance of Gods Sanctuary, not in Satans ballance of cunning suggestions. Will conscience condemne thy person at such a time, and under such circumstances? Nay, will not the Word of God acquit thee at such a time against all feares, for the substance and reality of a pious condition?

2. Some are clouded & darkned, either with melancholy, or afflictions, or temptations, where-

wherein the Christian seeth his face through a false glasse, (just as a Title is made by a deceitfull & cunning Lawyer) not according to truth, not all of it, but some of it: What is past heretofore for action and affection; or what hath falne out, not in the course of life since a mans conversion, but onely in case of surprisall and captivity. Now perhaps conscience may condemne thee, but this is an illegall sentence, it is a corrupted judgement, and is reversible; God will not judge of thee, as Conscience in such a case doth; Nay he will repeale it, and disannull it.

4. A fourth cause of doubtings, is, a feare lest a man hath sinned that great sin against the holy Ghost: And the main inducement to credit this, is, a sinning against cleare knowledge, which is one ingredient



in that sinne. Now this is my condition, saith a troubled soul, I have not onely sinned, but sinned against light shining in the Ministry, and working on my conscience; therefore I may rather conclude then question it, Mercy belongs not to me.

*Sol.*

To help a conscience thus inthralled, I would wish that such a person would 1. Be informed, 2. Be directed.

1. The Information which I would commend in this case, is fourefold.

First, that the sinne against the holy Ghost, is not any sin which a man commits through ignorance: Whatsoever the sinne or sinnes have beene, (whereof the party stands guilty) whether against the Law, or against the Gospel, suppose it be one, or many hainous sinnes, yet if the person be in a state of blindnesse  
and

and ignorance, if there is a nescience of the fact, if hee knowes not what he doth, this ignorance priviledgeth the sinnings thus far, that therefore they are not the sin against the holy Ghost.

Secondly, the sin against the holy Ghost is not any sinne against the Gospel, which is elicited and acted through a mis-beliefe or mis-perswasion: If the sinne be a sleighting of Euangelicall doctrines, nay a persecuting of them, and of the professors of them, yet if these acts of opposition depend totally on error in the judgment, on a judgement mis-perswaded, (*i.*) rather beleieving them not to be truths, rather thinking those wayes to be false wayes; I say this mis-beliefe preserves such sinnings yet from being sins against the holy Ghost, because the sinne against the holy Ghost suppo-

1 Tim. 1. 13



seth light even to conviction and approbation. See *Heb. 6. 4. 5.*

Thirdly, the sin against the holy Ghost is not every sinning against knowledge. These are not reciprocall propositions, every sin against the holy Ghost is against knowledg, and every sinne against knowledge is the sin against the holy Ghost. The former is true, but the latter is not; for many a converted man sinneth against knowledge, who yet never sinneth the sin against the holy Ghost.

In two cases a man sinning against knowledge, doth not yet sin that sin against the holy Ghost: One is, the case of a strong and violent temptation; Another is, the case of a sudden and turbulent passion: It is the same with *Peters* case against his knowledg denying and forswearing his Master.

If

If *Paul* before his conversion had had *Peters* knowledge, he had sinned this sin against the holy Ghost; And if *Peter* in his denyall had had *Pauls* malice joyned with his knowledge, he had also sinned that sinne: but the mis-beliefe of the one before his conversion, and the infirmity of the other after it, preserved from this sinne. Error mis-led the one, and sudden feare surprised the other.

Fourthly, there are three horrible sinnings which doe attend that sinne against the holy Ghost; and the Scripture (which wee were best exceeding warily to follow in resolving this case) expressely deliver them.

1. One is, totall Apostasie from the truths of Jesus Christ knowne and tasted. The truths of Christ must 1. be knowne and apprehended, 2. knowne



and tasted, they must be approved. 3. And then the person falls from these. 4. Nay his fall is not particular, (which is incident to the best) it is a totall fall, not a falling in the way, but a falling from the way of truth. *Heb. 6.4. If they were once inlightned and tasted, &c. If, ver. 6. they shall fall away.*

2. A second is, a malicious oppugnation of that truth which was once knowne and tasted, and from which now the person is false, called *Heb. 6.6. A crucifying of the Sonne of God afresh, And Heb. 10.26. A wilfull sinning after that we have received the knowledge of the truth.* And it was evident in the Pharisees, who saw and knew the light, but hated, and persecuted it unto the death.

3. A third is, finall impenitencie. Whosoever sinnes the fin

And despising the Spirit of Grace.

sin against the holy Ghost, he neither doth repent, nor can repent : He is so justly and for ever forsaken of God, and given up to a reprobate sense, and a seared conscience, that he cannot repent; though (perhaps) he may see his course to be evill, yet it is impossible (saith the Apostle in *Heb. 6. 6.*) to renew him to repentance.

F I N I S.



## ERRATA.

**P**Age 27. line 3. read locomotive.  
p. 30. l. 1. cities. p. 65. l. 21. out-  
grow. p. 104. l. 5. reflexive. p. 141. l.  
ult. in marg. dele *Quest.* p. 160. l. 21.  
open. p. 256. l. 24. pænæ. p. 264. l.  
11. in marg. imperfect. p. 330. l. 13.  
doubling. p. 338. l. 1. seekings. p.  
351. l. 26. fervent.

